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NEW STATESMAN

Mid-Autumn books

Ambassador College
DEC 10 1979

What sort of people do we think we are?

POVERTY AND THE ECONOMICS OF RECOVERY

Chairman Hua, the running dog
Would you buy a new car from Michael Edwardes?

Brian Harrison: socialist historians/David Caute: Gaullist culture
Penelope Mortimer on Mary McCarthy/David Mercer: theatre & politics
Benedict Nightingale: a female Hamlet

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 98 26 October 1979 No 2536

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Poverty, economics and moral science.

PUBLICATION of Peter Townsend's massive report *Poverty in the United Kingdom* (analysis begins on p.622) occurs at an apparently inauspicious time. Britain's official psyche – as bodied-forth in City punditry and economic soothsaying – is agonised over questions of capitalist survival. And conventionally, poverty must wait until other, more urgent probems have been resolved. In Mrs Thatcher's account, social dilapidations can be attended to only after some hoped-for renaissance in the productive system: this renaissance to be procured by devices of inequality which will make immediately worse the ills which they are supposed eventually to cure. The argument which says that the problem of production and the problem of poverty must be dealt with separately is one accepted in principle by the recent Labour administration.

Our argument goes otherwise. This is a good moment to examine the problem of poverty – because, so far from being something to be remedied after economic malaise has been disposed of, the truth is that poverty itself is the root cause of the malaise. 'The last cause of all real crises', said Marx, 'always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses': the point of the quotation is not that there is a simple Marxist answer to Britain's problems, but to suggest that no analysis is useful unless it confronts the same fundamentals that Marx (too rarely among economists) addressed himself to.

First, the impending crisis: no one should be allowed to get away with the idea that there is anything unexpected about it. Sir Geoffrey Howe is absurdly chopfallen at the horrid signals emerging from the Treasury computer. But he designed his facile, reactionary Budget on the proposition that forecasts could be ignored. Actually, those available suggested that his policies were self-defeating: something he dealt with by suppressing most of the Budget forecast. Exercising hard-won democratic rights, we obtained and published an independent forecast from the Treasury's econometric model (NS 15 June). This predicted that unemployment would reach 1.5 million early next year, and 1.7 million twelve months later if Howe did not change course – and that the economic renaissance he professed to see was nowhere on the horizon. All that has changed since is that British industry's Tory loyalty is turning flaky at the imminent prospect of serious recession, and that Howe himself is alarmed because the unions – so far from cringing – are making wage-claims which may invalidate our forecast of 14-15 per cent inflation. If you run your economic policy as a clamorous attack on working-class living-standards, you cannot expect people who negotiate for groups like the miners (who don't have any unemployment problem) to do anything but seize all they can get.

The truth is that some time next year Sir Geoffrey will either reflate the economy modestly, or see many of his friends in industry go bust. And, as he has meanwhile antagonised the unions, this will be accompanied by more inflation than might otherwise have been necessary. But there is a tendency – now more prevalent on the right than on the left – to conflate Britain's largely self-inflicted wounds with some supposed *Götterdammerung* of international capitalism. Will 1929 return? Will every currency be subsumed into gold? Will the huge surplus revenues of the oil-states topple the world's banking system, drowning everyone in unwanted currency? (Will the Owl of Minerva go supersonic?) Yes, all these things *might* happen. But what is likelier is that the size of the public sector in most Western economies will ensure a soggy recession, rather than a sharply catastrophic one; that the gold fever will, once again, burn itself out; that international bankers will continue to find pleasure and profit in devising receptacles for the oil-revenues of Arabia. As the German economic institutes forecast this week: the international scene looks fairly bleak, but nothing for them to cut their throats about.

BUT THAT'S A VIEWPOINT for countries – and there are some – which have a rough idea of the socio-economic direction they are trying to pursue. Britain, conspicuously, is not one of those: but faces, rather, the problem of trying to reverse a deep-set, long-term decline. And the value of *Poverty in the United Kingdom* is that it helps to remind us that the re-alignment of a society has as much to do with moral decision-making as economic science, and that the moral decisions have to come first. In a very simple sense, this emerges from Townsend's figures – we already have a society so unequal that nearly half our children are excluded from real participation in it. (Anyone, of course is welcome to challenge Townsend's figures, if they can.) First, who is prepared to buy a way-in to some allegedly more prosperous future if the price involves making that disparity immediately worse? No childhood occurs more than once, and there is supposed to be something in our tradition which prohibits the use of human beings as means towards an end. Second, is it rational to think that the machinery of a newly-productive society could be operated by generations increasingly composed of half-educated social rejects?

We are commonly informed (variously, with jubilation or lamenting) that Keynes is dead. Rather than echoing the truism, it is useful to remember what Keynes actually did. He was not, and scarcely aspired to be an especially rigorous or profound economist. His special achievement seems hardly worth remarking today, which was to destroy the ideas, on which he had himself been raised by Marshall, that demand in an economy is automatic, and cannot fail. Not much of a discovery, surely, for had not Marx shown that 'nothing could be more childish' than the doctrine that 'every seller brings his buyer to market with him'? Why was the plain enough idea that supply, in some circumstances, might not be accompanied by effective demand so sadly buried for so many years? (It was not unique to Marx among the classical economists.) Why was it that Keynes managed to penetrate the problem, while Marx's own followers continued to parrot the slogans of sound finance?

His success was due to moral insight as much as to technical facility. This has almost nothing to do with archbishoply lectures about true reform occurring in the human heart, and a great deal to do with avoiding intellectual confusion. An economic idea which produces

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mass unemployment (Say's Law) or sanctifies mass poverty (current monetarism) has no useful content unless you actively approve of poverty or unemployment. It is not a hypothesis about the physical world. It is a hypothesis about human relationships, and as a matter of moral science it cannot be more important than the people it is supposed to serve.

The social sciences have a long, wretched history of error upon this score: utilitarianism, the progenitor of the system which Keynes demolished, was an account of economic behaviour which was posing as morality; Marxism, as developed by the disciples if not the founder, is an account of morality mistaking itself at critical moments for an account of economics (a less unattractive failing, but still a dangerous one). Keynes' intuition perceived that economics was as important as dentistry, no more, no less: which is to say it is very important if toothache is a national problem and morality requires it to be cured. Because he was clear on this point, whatever his confusions elsewhere, he was able to scrap the learning of a lifetime when it no longer served the requirements of the society he lived in.

THAT IS the crucial part of the Keynesian inheritance, and if it is dead, so much the worse for us. Arguments are frequently presented to suggest that Britain's problems stem from lack of physical resources, or from paucity of economic techinque – or from our being blown about in world-wide storms which are outside our control. None of these propositions is absurd: the causes of our difficulties are manifold. But we cannot even think sensibly about them until we acknowledge that a nation facing a profound crisis cannot shelve moral decisions until the arrival of a more propitious moment: *Poverty in the United Kingdom* requires that we ask ourselves what sort of a people we consider ourselves to be, and what is the basic condition of membership in our society.

This, in itself, provides no guarantees for the future except that it prevents us from talking nonsense to each other – which is a precondition of any deliberate, as against fortuitous, progress in human affairs. It helps us to recognise that any economic doctrine which professes to sell national salvation by scarring the irreplaceable lives of half our people is a fraud before it begins. (Remember, we are not yet talking about a country which is destitute of wealth: we are talking about a system which decides that entitlement to it shall be lopsided.) Leave aside for the moment the complex argument about the special inadequacies of British capitalism – which are due far less than its half-conscious apologists would like us to think to storms of the world, and far more to the incompetence of the managers of our society. Leave aside, for the moment, the fact that economic policies for the replacement of monetarism will be difficult to understand and difficult to apply. (Getting his moral priorities right only made Keynes' task possible: it didn't make it easy.)

All of these arguments can be taken up in more detail, and with more examples, as the Thatcherites lurch towards their reckoning with reality. But the central matter, on which all else depends, is that nobody can justify, through appeal to some hypothetical end, the sacrifice of our present people to a condition of exile in the country they were born.

NOTES

Computer-run policing

Duncan Campbell writes: A new plan for computerising the operations of the Greater Manchester police force places so much emphasis on computer control that the police would plod to a standstill without it. Their plan for *computer aided policing* (CAP) in the 1980s indicates that the police computer centre would have to be defended as though it were a key military target.

The plan was prepared by a specialist consultancy company, PACTEL, and submitted earlier this year to the county's police committee. A copy of the report was leaked to a local publication, the *City Enquirer*. The report notes that a key feature of the system is the highest levels of 'survivability' under attack, and comments that 'the time when the full power of the Force's CAP may most be required could be under the conditions of the severest threat'. To provide special security, the consultants recommend that the entrances to the computer centre – an annexe to the force HQ at Chester House, Manchester – should be 'hardened', and that all personnel working there should be vetted.

Under the £3 million scheme, the force computer will keep a moment-to-moment record of the whereabouts of police resources and advise police controllers about the possible response to any incident such as a 999 call. In quieter times, it will generate statistical analyses of types of crime being reported and other information on the way police resources are being used. More controversial however, is the plan to computerise local criminal records files, which in time will extend to the computerisation of all local intelligence files, unless the police are prohibited from doing this. The authors recognise that the 'present political climate is not favourable'. Since the report was written, however, the Home Secretary has said that he favours computerising local intelligence records. His comment was made in the wake of the revelations about vetted jurors, which confirmed that the police were building up intelligence files on anyone they came into contact with, even victims of crime.

In order to allow for computerising local intelligence files, all criminal records on the computer will have 'pointers' to any information not yet computerised, to allow for a 'future changeover' to computers. If the operation of Manchester's local intelligence gathering 'collators' is typical of other police forces in Britain, then up to one in five Manchester adults will be on their files.

The new computer will also be directly linked to the Police National Computer (PNC), which now has 30 million records on people and vehicles. The records on both computers will be cross-referenced, and the link will allow the PNC files to be checked directly from all the terminals of the new Manchester computer.

The authors of the report visited the PNC centre for a briefing and indiscreetly report a hitherto secret planned future development of the PNC. This is a proposal to start cross-referencing names and addresses of vehicle owners and driving licences to generate a new databank which will cover most adults in the UK. Although police have powers to get this information now, it is not available in a useful form and can only be checked in the most serious of crimes where the work involved is justified. The 'possible' new access to driving licence computer information mentioned in the report would be a major new extension of police surveillance.

Rhodesia's censors

Chris Mullin writes: Students of the remarkable way in which much of the British press reports the war in Rhodesia will be interested in the newspaper accounts of the recent raid by Rhodesian forces on a guerrilla camp inside Mozambique.

In a report headed 'Hundreds killed by Rhodesian raiders', Tony Hawkins wrote in the *Financial Times* (2 October): 'there was no official report of guerrilla casualities, but reporters who flew with the raiders said field commanders put enemy losses at "several hundred". One calculation was that more than five hundred of Mr Mugabe's men died in the assault'. Later the *Financial Times* report quoted Rhodesian army sources as saying the bodies of dead guerrillas had been removed after the initial attack making it impossible to calculate the casualties. Other papers followed suit. The *Express* and the *Telegraph* both reported uncritically the claim that Rhodesian forces had killed several hundred guerrillas for the loss of only two of their own men.

Only Paul Ellman in the *Guardian* set out the background to this claim. He revealed that only one journalist, Mr Allen Pizzey a Canadian freelance, had been to the scene of the fighting and then only three days after the initial attack. The journalist had been accompanied by two television cameramen and all their reports had been heavily censored. Mr Pizzey was not allowed to brief the Salisbury press corps without a spokesman for the military, Mr Ian Young being present. Mr Young insisted on correspondents submitting their reports to him for censorship after he had successfully decided which questions it was safe for Mr Pizzey to answer. Apparently not even the television accounts of the raid were allowed out uncensored.

Mr Pizzey's own report, which appeared in the *Daily Express* made no mention of censorship (neither did the *Financial Times*). Further Mr Pizzey neglected to tell *Daily Express* readers what he had earlier told his colleagues in Salisbury, that he had only actually *seen* the bodies of the three dead guerrillas. Which is rather a different story from 'several hundred' dead reported by most of our newspapers. The sole source for that claim was the Rhodesian military command.

Hope after Clydebank betrayal

Brian Wilson writes: Two main options have emerged for a rescue operation at the Singer sewing machine factory at Clydebank – due to close in June 1980, with 3000 redundancies. One option is the production of a light domestic sewing machine now being developed at Clydebank: the other envisages sub-contracting engineering work to the factory.

Both schemes would require substantial government intervention. But the Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr George Younger, has already ruled out the possibility of the government running the operation through the Scottish Development Agency, if private entrepreneurs fail to materialise. Mr Younger surprised a group of concerned Labour MPs whom he met last week by telling them that the Scottish Office is 'awash' with money to help Clydebank.

A new lightweight machine could, it is thought,

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be manufactured at a price that would make it competitive with rivals from Japan and Taiwan. The immediate problem for the government is to persuade Singer, as a parting gesture and as an act of contrition for going back on previous guarantees about the future of the Clydebank factory to concede the manufacturing rights. One of this scheme's advocates, Dr Jeremy Bray MP, believes that Singers' arm could be twisted and that a two-year embargo on imports would be needed to give the project a chance of success.

The sub-contracting scheme is seen as the more immediately hopeful. It is favoured by members of the Singer management who are strongly committed to staying at Clydebank. At present, a great deal of work is sent out of Clydeside by companies like IBM and Rolls Royce. If this could be diverted to Clydebank through government encouragement, it is thought that about 500 jobs could be saved initially.

Singer cut-backs in the Clydebank labour force over the past few years engendered pessimism among the work-force, which was not allayed by last year's announcement by the company of an £8 million investment programme. Nonetheless, the finality of the closure announcement came as a major blow to the unemployed stricken town. Singer were Scotland's biggest employers of private labour in the mid-60s and Clydebank's coat of arms includes a ship and a sewing machine to symbolise the two industries which have dominated the town's history. Shop stewards convenor, Mr John MacFadyen, said that there was a general feeling that the sooner they were rid of Singer the better. When he proposed to a mass meeting that the closure should be vigorously opposed, he failed to find a seconder.

Universities go bust

Rick Rogers writes: The Government's proposal to make overseas students pay the full cost of their education will deal a crippling blow to UK universities – and will ironically affect home students more than overseas ones. One university spokesman has called it 'an act of national suicide'. Operating through the University Grants Committee (UGC), the Government proposes to reduce the recurrent grant to universities by 13 per cent (the equivalent of official funding of overseas students) and to hold all other income at (in real terms) the 1979/80 level. Universities will be expected to make up the 13 per cent cut by charging overseas students the 'full economic cost' of their education.

Following the 30 per cent rise in September, the fees are currently £940 for undergraduates and £1,230 for graduates. The 'full' rate has been estimated, crudely, at an average annual fee of £3,500. But it is likely to be much more at some institutions. Such increases will make UK universities wholly uncompetitive with foreign universities in attracting overseas students. High calibre students will go elsewhere – as eventually will high calibre staff. Those students who are left will be distinguished only by their ability to pay. Standards in UK universities will consequently decline.

To make matters worse, universities don't yet know what the 1979/80 level of resources is to be (nor even 1978/9), because of the need to meet outstanding wage and salary agreements. So they are unable to plan ahead sensibly. Overseas students' fees make a significant contribution to the fixed costs of universities – which are over 60 per cent of all costs. Fewer overseas students means a cutback in facilities and courses for all students. Universities feel unable to weather such a large cut in income – on top of the economising of the past five or six years. Some already claim to be bankrupt.

Those most vulnerable have a high proportion of overseas students – for example, the London School of Economics has 35 per cent, Essex 27 per cent, Imperial College 24 per cent. (In 1978, some 12.6 per cent of the total student population were from overseas.) Universities with only some 10 per cent overseas students are likely to find it hard to cope, but graduate schools, and universities with a large number of technology or research places will suffer most. Those with a high proportion of residential places (and therefore high fixed costs), such as Reading, will also be poorly placed to absorb the proposed loss of income. This time, the Overseas Development Ministry will not get extra funding to cover the increases (see p.620).

The UGC has asked universities to calculate the effects of the Government's proposals and to document those areas most at risk. Possible consequences spoken of so far include staff redundancies, an even larger cut in home student admissions than the 6 per cent already proposed by the UGC, the winding up of some key science and technology courses, an end to essential research projects, poorer staff/ student ratios, London colleges moving out to fill cheaper buildings left vacant by redundant colleges of education, mergers between universities, and even closures.

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals has objected strongly and in detail to Education Secretary Mark Carlisle: 'the Government is on the point of a decision which may mark an irreversible downturn in the national and international fortunes of British universities, . . . this decision will be taken hastily and without any real consideration of its consequences'. LSE director Ralf Dahrendorf has called Government intentions 'the deliberate destruction of excellence'. Carlisle's reply is that 'universities will wish to recognise the very real problems which face this country and the determination of the Government to tackle them'. He expects universities to play their part. That part seems to be the dismantling of higher education in the UK.

New risks in abortion plans

Anna Coote writes: As John Corrie's Abortion (Amendment) Bill goes into committee stage this week, with a strong chance of becoming law, most people are still under the impression that it aims to do little more than reduce the time limit for termination of pregnancy from 28 to 20 weeks. In fact, its various clauses would make it virtually impossible for doctors to authorise abortion on 'social' grounds. If the Bill were passed in its present form it would reduce the number of legal abortions by 60 per cent.

The 1967 Abortion Act made it legal to terminate a pregnancy where to continue it would constitute a risk to the woman's life, or to the physical or mental health of the woman or any of her existing children, and where that risk was greater than the risk of abortion. More than 90 per cent of all abortions are authorised on these grounds at present. Corrie's Bill removes the element of comparison and seeks to allow abortion only where there is a *grave* risk to the woman's life, or where there is a *substantial* risk of *serious* injury to the physical or mental health of the woman or any of her existing children. The Bill also seeks to extend the period within which prosecutions can be brought for breaches of the law – from six months to three years – which will make doctors all the more wary of how they interpret the law. It is not at all clear what would constitute a 'grave' risk to the woman's health; or where the dividing line would lie between a 'substantial' risk and one of (say) slight but significant proportions; or between a serious injury and a minor one. It would not, apparently, be legal to authorise an abortion where there was a substantial risk of minor injury or a slight but significant risk of serious injury. In medical terms, the criteria are nonsensical – which is no doubt part of the reason why the British Medical Association maintains that there should be no amendment to the 1967 Act.

The Bill would make an abortion after 20 weeks unlawful except where it was necessary to *preserve* the life of the woman, or where two doctors certified 'in good faith' that tests showed the child would be born severely handicapped. Abortion would not therefore be legal after 20 weeks if there were merely a *risk* – however grave – to the life or health of the woman. Doctors and counsellors are well aware that long waiting lists for hospital beds would be more likely to spell the difference between legality and illegality than any delay on the woman's part. The TUC is holding a match on Sunday (28 October) to demonstrate against the Corrie Bill and in favour of a woman's right to choose. It assembles at 12 noon at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park.

Just fancy that . . .

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... activities of the chairman. The current investments of the Party's superannuation fund also have their drawbacks, if of a different kind. It seems wherever the Party turns to make an honest buck, the familiarly unacceptable face of capitalism raises its head. Of the 55 companies in which the Pension Fund makes investments, 32 make donations to the Tory Party and other right-wing groups, and at least 18 are active in South Africa.

DAILY Mirror Friday October 19, 1979

Party pension fund poured cash into 'banned' firms

LABOUR'S SOUTH AFRICA CONNECTION

VANISHED . . VICAR AND EX-MAYOR'S WIFE—See Page 3

Kids sue Tory axemen

Nick Anning writes: Cuts in the facilities for child care by a London council could be against the provisions of the Children Acts. A group of social workers and seven children in their care are seeking a high court ruling this week against the Tory controlled borough of Fulham and Hammersmith for attempting to close the Goldhawk Road community home in order to cut £31,000 from their social services budget. The Attorney General was formally asked on Monday to give his permission for a 'relator' action, and his decision is awaited.

The plaintiffs – David Bell, a Hammersmith social worker and the children and other social workers – have asked the Attorney for his *fiat* or consent. This is necessary in order to bring a case concerning the local authorities' public duty in common law. Their application for an interim injunction to prevent closure of the home alleges that the council has broken Section 12 of the Children Act 1948. Among other things, the Acts provide for the children's wishes to be taken into account in any decision. The decision to close the home was taken without any consultation, and staff and children were peremptorily informed of the closure, from the end of this year, by a phone call from the social services director.

Curiously, the Fulham and Hammersmith council contains an equal number of Labour and Conservative members, with the balance held by two Liberals One of the liberal pair, Simon Knott, chairs the social services committee, and took a leading role in planning £150,000 cuts in the department. The council is cutting £800,000 from its overall budget, involving many cuts in important services.

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LEYLAND

Christopher Hird & Patrick Wintour

BL workers are being asked to accept a plan they cannot realistically judge

Why BL workers should vote No

IMAGINE YOU ARE a director of a large manufacturing company, barely profitable, but with the bank standing behind you to finance the essential investment which will, in time, transform the company's position. One day the managing director arrives with the news that the company is on the verge of bankruptcy and the only way to save it is by getting rid of a fifth of the workforce in the company's main division. Imagine further that the managing director insists that a decision be made within a month and then refuses to reveal key pieces of information about the profitability of the company or to discuss alternative strategies. Imagine that by chance at the golf club you meet the company's bank manager who says that money will be forthcoming to help the company whatever happens – flatly contradicting the advice of one of your executives who said the money was in doubt.

If you were such a director, the chances are that you would seriously consider trying to sack the managing director. As the workers at British Leyland, currently voting on the Edwardes plan to save the company are in such a position, the best that they can do is to vote 'No'. Neither the BL workforce, nor their unions have the information they need to judge whether the Edwardes plan is realistic. The BL Cars 1980 Corporate Plan, a full copy of which the NEW STATESMAN has obtained, does not contain anything so prosaic as a profits forecast. It does however suggest that the company is assuming an 80 per cent increase in productivity by the middle of the eighties – something that it is expected to achieve despite the fact that capital investment in new models also revealed in the plan is much below that of other car producers. Other management figures suggest that BL is expecting a significant increase in profits by the mid-eighties if it gets rid of the 28,000 jobs it is aiming to do.

That the BL workforce is being asked to vote on the Edwardes plan without this sort of information being clearly debated, that the unions have had only a month to work on the plan and that Edwardes has anyway vetoed the union proposal of a joint management/union approach to the government merely reinforces the phoney nature of the current vote. The BL workers have no statutory right in the management of their company and the referendum is little more than a device to make it easier to close factories which will, in all probability, be closed regardless of the outcome. In the anxiety to get a 'Yes' vote, the details of BL's finances are being needlessly muddied, confusing the short and the long-term problems and rarely disentangling the profitable bits from the loss making parts. It is for instance popularly believed that the mass produced car section of BL – Austin Morris – loses money and the specialist car producer – Jaguar Rover Triumph – makes profits. This is, in fact, the opposite of the truth.

THERE IS NO DOUBT that BL has serious problems, at the centre of which is the company's inability to finance its capital spending programme: since 1975 BL has financed only 16 per cent of its total capital requirements of £1,136 million itself, most of the rest coming from the government. This is likely to be the pattern certainly for the next two years. No company in the private sector could hope to finance itself in this way; as a guide, in 1977 manufacturing industry as a whole financed around 70 per cent of its capital requirements internally from retained profits.

BL has also not been like other car companies. During the sixties, when the growth in demand was slackening and profits growth was threatened, some companies invested heavily, to achieve economies of scale and abroad, to increase sales. As part of the process, concentration and rationalisation

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IT WILL HELP RESTORE YOUR CONFIDENCE SHOULD IT EVER DESERT YOU.

IT WILL SOOTHE AND SOLACE YOU AFTER A HECTIC DAY.

IT WILL INSULATE YOU FROM THE NOISE AND CHAOS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

IT WILL REBUILD YOUR MORALE; YOUR AMBITIONS.

BUT MOST OF ALL, IT WILL REMIND YOU THAT YOUR LIFE HAS NOT BEEN TOTALLY WITHOUT SUCCESS.

meant that a handful of large companies came to dominate the car markets of the world. The North American market was in the hands of three companies: General Motors, Chrysler and Ford. But this did not happen in the smaller and fragmented European market and in particular it did not happen in British Leyland.

Although a product of a series of takeovers and mergers BL was essentially a financial animal. Little was done to make it into a unified motor company and despite its large product range it remained relatively small. The Ryder report[1] chronicled BL's problems: old plant, as a result of low investment, caused by low profitability and a generous dividend policy; low productivity and few products in the pipeline. BL is still suffering from the results of this neglect. As the NEB's report on the 1979 corporate plan remarks:

> The NEB and BL consider that the lack of engineering resources is one of the most worrying (problems) for the future of the company. In comparison with some other manufacturers BL has only one third the number of engineers per model line. The problem is one which has built up over the years . . .*

So, in 1975, BL was in no position to withstand the increased competitiveness that followed the rise in the price of oil and it did not have the resources to finance the five or six year investment programme which might save it.

THE BRITISH TAXPAYER'S inheritance was, then, the weakest part of an industry suffering worldwide from overcapacity. Ryder's solution was to recommend a large investment programme of over £900 million in the years to 1982, as he considered that 'the record of under-investment is the main reason for the low productivity of BL's workforce compared with say Fiat or Volkswagen'. The Parliamentary Expenditure Committee report of the same year agreed with this analysis. Many of Ryder's assumptions have proved to be over-optimistic – BL holding 33 per cent of the UK car market (currently it is 22 per cent) and BL finding £1.50p for every £1 the government put in (so far it has been nearer 25p) for example. But one idea has hung on: all government money was to be conditional on good industrial relations. These were to be improved by a security of earnings scheme, a productivity deal, centralised bargaining and the introduction of a participation scheme.

The fate of this participation scheme is a paradigm of much that has gone wrong with BL in the last four years. The fingers of the leaderwriters of the press are almost worn to the bone with denunciations of the low productivity and high incidence of strikes in BL. They have drawn support from the Think Tank report which said:

> Even where it is possible to measure the effect of under-investment on productivity, the results demonstrate that inadequate capital equipment is only a minor cause of lower productivity.

The culprits, the report said, were overmanning, a slower work pace and poor maintenance, supporting their case with a study made of the productivity of Belgian workers. The mistakes in the Think Tank's report have been recently been pointed out[2] – the greatest being the failure to understand how one section's production rhythym in a complex process such as car manufacture can only be changed by large scale investment in the process as a whole. A study conducted by the Expenditure Committee showed the strong correlation between value added per worker and fixed assets per worker. Almost every company covered had fixed assets of at least £2,500 and value added of over £4,000; in BL's case the figures were £930 and £2,129.

Clearly successful companies need both investment and the co-operation of the workforce. The Ryder proposals for industrial democracy were to be 'crucial in securing' the second, and in increasing productivity. But the three-tier participation scheme failed: it became a way for management to rush through plans they had already decided on and to swamp the 15 senior stewards and conveners in the Cars Council with paper work they could not digest. Derek Robinson, the convener at Longbridge and head of the unofficial Leyland combine became closely associated with the participation scheme and still believes that before the arrival of Edwardes participation was working at the top and at plant level. (At the intermediate division level he admits failure.) Robinson particularly praises the joint discussion over

[1] *British Leyland: the next decade,* HMSO 1975.

[2] *The Future of the UK Motor Industry.* Krish Bhaskar, Kogan Page 1979.

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the introduction of the Mini Metro where there

> were trips to see the proposed technology in use at Fiat, discussion of factory lay-out, a decision to have team working patterns and a reduction in the numbers of jobs lost during the change-over from one mini to another.

All of that changed under Edwardes who announced the closure of Speke unilaterally and involved the unions in extensive discussions in the first 1980 corporate plan which were still taking place a week before he announced the new plan with 28,000 jobs lost.

Not everyone agrees with Robinson's sanguine view of participation. For example Ryder refused to let workers onto the main board. Many feel it was a way of detaching senior stewards from their members particularly at plant level, and that far too much discussion revolved around productivity at the expense of other matters. The stewards never had sufficient back-up to do anything but react to the latest corporate strategy. (The same problem exists at Chrysler where management have 22 staff servicing their side of the planning agreement while the unions have been waiting two years to hear from the SSRC Open Door scheme whether the Coventry Workshop, a local research project can be financed to help the stewards with the planning agreement.) John Villiers, an ACTS steward at Jaguar, Browns Lane in Coventry says of Leyland's participation:

> Management participated one day a month and that was the day of the meeting. After that they would be back to their old ways. Discussion on the JMC was pathetic. The type of thing they were talking about was workers turning up late. The best things we got from it was cancer screening, a blood donor service and an open day.

Five weeks ago, after giving six months' notice, the unions pulled out of the participation scheme, which had by then become a way of creating a bond between unions and the company with little of value being revealed. For instance, the report prepared for the July Car Council meeting this year contains not one single useful piece of financial information about the company's future. But it does contain a letter, signed by Robinson and by Ray Horrocks, chairman of Austin-Morris, deploring alleged leaks of information (about possible factory closures) which are, they say, 'against the national interest'.

BL's unwillingness to divulge detailed information about itself contrasts oddly with the NEB's argument for the Edwardes' reorganisation that it could make it 'easier to identify the relative profitability of different parts of the business'. The unions have not received information on, for instance, divisional profits, financial forecasts or detailed marketing plans. This is partly because they have not asked for such information. Of the many problems that they brought to the Labour government about what was going on in BL, disclosure of information was not among them. The unions' reluctance to analyse BL's plans is changing. The unofficial combine is providing its own plan. The announcement of the Edwardes plan has hastened change at official level too. One event in particular has been responsible. Sir Leslie Murphy has privately assured the unions that the NEB will provide BL with the remaining £225m. of the £1 billion agreed with the last government whatever happens, flatly contradicting the suggestion of BL'. Director of Business Strategy, Mike Carver, that it might be stopped, even if the company goes ahead with the planned cutbacks.

THE SEEDS OF THE current crisis were planted when as a matter of government policy the pound started to rise. The BL Cars Corporate Plan is quite clear:

> While it was anticipated that the expansion of North Sea Oil production would buoy up the exchange rate, the extent to which this could occur was not forseen.

The key assumption on exchange rates is that the pound will 'decline only very slowly from the average 1979 level'. In addition, BL are now assuming no growth in the economy in 1980, compared with positive, albeit low growth before. In view of the amount in the newspapers about the plan being necessary because of low productivity, it is instructive to note that the Corporate Plan makes no mention whatsoever of this.

Although other parts of BL are affected by the recovery plan – the Park Royal bus factory and Aveling Marshall, the agricultural machinery factory, are to close and there are to be redundancies at the Bathgate commercial vehicle plant – most of the cutbacks come in the car division. In Austin Morris, for instance, 8,200 jobs are to go by 1982, but by 1985 this company is expected to be producing 40 per cent more cars: an increase of 80 per cent in output per man. BL say they are confident this can be achieved although the forecast assumes a far better industrial relations record than the past and the yet-to-be-accepted incentive scheme sees only 20 per cent productivity increase. The increase in sales are expected to come from the new models – chiefly the Mini Metro (1981) and LC10 (to replace the Allegro and the Marina in 1982); in the Mini's case the market share is expected to increase from 4.7 to 7.6 per cent in the year of launch.

Such forecasts should be set against the capital investment planned for these new lines. The total amount planned for the LC10 is £388 million over a six year period, though Ford have repeatedly told the unions that the minimum needed for a new Cortina is £450 million. So far the unions have been told that BL hope to save on this by using the existing Allegro line and, in addition, spending only £134 million before the launch, which has been brought forward by twelve months. In addition, the production of the new Mini is to be cut back by 2,000 cars a week when the original target of 6,500 was said to be economically essential.

The unions have also been told that BL as a whole expects to finance 60 per cent of its 1980-85 capital investment programme of £1,818 million through its depreciation charge and retained profits itself. If achieved, this would be a remarkable turnround from the last five years. It would suggest profits of something like £400m. over the last few years of the period and should make the raising of £730m. from the government relatively easy. If the company is capable of making that sort of turnround, with the assumptions it has made about sterling and the economy, then the question which any curious worker might ask is: what happens on different assumptions, and is such a big cut-back now essential? This week's abolition of exchange controls dropped the pound down. Already the dollar/pound ratio is within a whisker of the 1980 rate assumed in the BL plan. All this presupposes that price rather than quality is the ground on which BL should complete abroad.

Many other aspects of the plan don't add up or have yet to be settled. Just the costs of the closures will be £200m. The brand new £24m. Castle Bromwich paint shop, admittedly bedevilled with technical difficulties, is to be shut along with the pressing and body facilities – so who will service Longbridge and Solihull with bodies? The management at Castle Bromwich have been saying that the plant may survive if productivity increases by Christmas; the plan says it will close.

The worst mess has been at Canley. Under Ryder, Canley was to close. Then it was reprieved by being given the Dolomite and the Stag. Then it was to have the TR7 again transferred down at a cost of £20m. from Speke. Then it was to be the home of the BL-Honda link-up for the new Bounty; as late as spring the convenor at Canley was sent on a trip to Honda in Japan. Now Canley is to close, the restless TR7 is to be moved to Solihull and the Bounty will be assembled at Cowley.

Rover Solihull where the management were recently trying to get a night shift, is actually suffering from over-capacity. Seneffe Belgium, which according to Edwardes is merely under review, is quite clearly to be effectively closed under the corporate plan: only 600 predistribution workers will remain. The proposed £27m. aluminium foundry, once essentially needed to produce 60 per cent of the company's aluminium castings, is not to be built, inevitably leaving BL dependent on European manfacturers. And so on.

There are enough uncertainties in all this to wonder whether the plan really will mean the survival of BL. The Government have their doubts. Some weeks ago the Employment Ministry began a survey into the effect on the components industry of the total collapse of BL. The unions – whose answer to the high-powered corporate planning department of BL are two or three overworked research officers – feel that BL are seriously under investing in their new product range. With more investment better cars could be produced, that would sell better and, given eight instead of five years, BL really would stand a chance of survival. In an industry where big is beautiful – 1 million a year production a minimum – Leyland is so small that a merger with a European manufacturer seems a necessity. The unions in their emergency committee have had little chance to test these ideas especially since BL have resisted attempts to raise matters of the model programme, investment funding and market forecasting.

The problem for BL workers is that the prospects under the Edwardes plan may be much worse than they appear; that there will be more redundancies to come. However, several things are clear: BL is not under immediate short-term pressure. There are no major debts which fall due for repayment before the end of this year. It is a moot point whether a liquidation would involve more closures than Edwardes plans at the moment: there may be some lessons to be learnt from the case of Rolls-Royce which went into liquidation under the last Tory government (admittedly not quite so manic as this one) and lived to tell the tale. The only way in which BL workers can say they want a plan for the company in which they played a full part, is to ignore the reports of £7,000 redundancy payments and vote no.

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FREE SPEECH

WITH THE BALANCE of payments billions in the red, despite North Sea Oil, the economy stagnant and our international competitiveness at a nadir, it seems quixotic to abolish all controls over the export of capital, as the Government did this week. It seems especial folly with British domestic productive investment languishing and a general decline in world trade threatened. Not that the Bank of England ever administered exchange controls without open disdain and reluctance. Our foreign investment even in the worst years was enormous, at times running over £1 billion a year, yet our net invisible income has dwindled mainly because of our contribution to the EEC, aggravated by a dear money policy bringing a rush of hot money. This was encouraged despite the swollen reserves, which represent not in fact our own capital but debts.

The arguments in favour of relaxing control over foreign exchange have been put forward vociferously for a long time. The hot money, it was said, was driving the pound to levels at which most of our export and also our import competing companies would go to the wall. Abolishing exchange controls would push the pound down, thus helping exports; investment abroad would represent a nest egg for the future. None of these arguments holds water.

It would have been possible – and indeed prudent – to copy the Swiss, by taxing and putting other obstacles in the way of foreign short-term balances to discourage their costly receipt. Alternatively, it would have been easy to buy up the currencies offered – mainly dollars – and not let their influx drive up the pound. Unfortunately the Bank of England, full of the new wisdom of monetarism, vetoed (if that was necessary under a Friedmanite government) the latter. They said that the increase in the money supply which this would have entailed would exacerbate inflation. Just why the influx of capital, which should have remained inert and not have been used for the purchase of goods and services, should have had that consequence was never disclosed: it was a question of religious fervour.

As to the nest egg argument, it ignores the fact that we get only a fraction of the income of our foreign investment: wages as well as taxes accrue to the foreigners, while domestic investment yields us its full fruit.

The real reason for an otherwise incomprehensible step is that foreign exchange control can prevent a Labour victory at the polls from causing a panic – as in 1964 – that would force the Government into reluctant acceptance of conventional policies. With more capital flowing abroad, and home investment necessarily coming under pressure because of the shortage of managerial ability and the limitation of equity backing, the expansion of domestic productive capacity will be less than it would have been. The Government and, more perniciously, the Bank of England, has taken one more step to an irreversible restoration of the pre-war economy.

Thomas Balogh

ECONOMIC MONITOR, missing so far this month, will be back next week. We hope thereafter it will appear unfailingly in the second edition of each month.

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POLITICS
Philip Whitehead

Both the NEC and the PLP want the Labour Party to change

We are all reformers now

THIS WEEK'S RUMPUS in the Parliamentary Labour Party about its representation on the Party Inquiry has really been about one question; who guards the guardians? Will the Inquiry have the power to question the book-keepers when it opens the books? Which books will it be able to open? How about those which carry the sacred texts on relations between the different sections of the Party? Or have they been locked away on the *fiat* of the constitutional votes already taken at Brighton? As this whole affair is overshadowed by the power struggle within the party, the answers you get to these questions depend on the present influence and future expectations of the respondent. Some memories are as short as other expectations are long.

And that is a pity. Because organisationally the party is a shambles, which neither a complacent parliamentary leadership nor an unrepentant National Executive Committee can justify. Without change Labour will lose men, will implode to be just another fading star – a tendency among tendencies. Some of us feel that we could see it, within a dozen years, in a position rather like that of the Parti Communiste Français, insular, suspicious, still with a steady 20 per cent of the vote and deep roots in some of the unions, but fundamentally negative. Fewer people voted for Labour when it last 'won' an election than voted for it in the year of total rout – 1959. Membership is less than one sixth that of the Tories – perhaps a quarter of a million all told, with only 69 full-time agents left – half the number in 1972. Too many constituency parties are held by small bands, terrified geriatrics on the right and sour sectarians on the far left.

In policy terms, too, the party looks uninviting: huge, unwieldy and self-selecting NEC study groups range across the terrain, cobbling together policy statements in a process which oddly resembles the clumsy compositing procedures of the annual conference. To belong to one of these sub-committees is to be in receipt of patronage of a kind, which is another reason for regulating their membership, and linking them with the study groups of the Parliamentary Party. So long as the policy can receive the imprimatur of the block vote no one has looked too closely at the inconsistencies. This in turn has led to (or simply fortified) a tendency for the Labour leadership in Parliament to treat conference decisions with levity or even contempt. The extraordinary circumstances of the last election, when the Cabinet, staked out far from home in a desert of its own choosing, went along with prime ministerial vetoes on the more radical proposals, was simply an exaggerated form of the normal custom and practice.

It was this which led to the Brighton Conference passing Composite 25, in effect rewriting Clause 5 of the constitution, handing over to the NEC responsibility for the Manifesto, which it had previously shared with the Parliamentary Labour Party. The PLP had not been consulted in May, it was told, so what was it worried about? This has strengthened the resolve of the PLP to ask for equal representation on the forthcoming Inquiry. The Manifesto debate at Brighton, and the earlier rebuff before the farce of the European election campaign, has convinced many MPs that a thorough inquiry must look at the accountability of the NEC, and its democratic credentials through the make-up of the conference, just as the PLP will itself be examined. The party leadership, having failed to defend the *status quo* backstairs at Brighton, still seems not to realise that the argument now is between two groups of reformers, both of whom have some right on their side, and not one between a wise and unappreciated paternalism and its destructive critics. Had the righteous Mr Jim Murray changed his mind on the constitutional votes at Brighton, and swung the AUEW the other way, it would not have made the *manner* of such decision-making any more palatable.

Jim Callaghan, with Michael Foot riding shotgun, certainly wants 'substantial' representation for the PLP on the Inquiry. But he would not put the matter to a vote at the PLP itself, and he seems now to fear another rebuff from the NEC which might give the Tory press another chance to gloat. It is as though Callaghan and Foot still wistfully feel that things will get back where they were, when all you needed was the word to the right people. Few of those who are critical of the present NEC, however, would feel any sense of elation if they were simply whisked back to the old NEC, which did the leadership's bidding.

The new mood for spreading the decision-making and for increasing accountability is widely shared. Re-selection, done once in the lifetime of any parliament (or twice in this one for most MPs, because of the new constituencies which will be created – to Labour's electoral loss – by the Boundary Commissioners), is here to stay. So is the election of the Cabinet by MPs.

So is a different forum for discussing the Manifesto. That process, however, is one in which MPs must participate. They are crucially involved in the arguments about organisation, policy and internal democracy. They feel they should be represented at the Inquiry, since they are directly elected by eleven million Labour voters, and need the means to turn that eleven into twelve if they are to deliver all – or anything – which conference requires. To exclude them, as the NEC appears tempted to, from Inquiry and Manifesto alike, would show a foolish indifference to the balance of priorities which the NEC and the PLP can together represent.

The relationship need not be sweetness and light; it must be rule by common sense. What the vanguard of activists want, and what present and potential Labour voters want is not necessarily always the same. Linking them requires cooperation between the two bodies who they separately elect, not the subordination of either one by the other.

Tories ditch development

Jonathan Dimbleby writes: Those who have heard of Neil Marten incline to the view that he is a charming fellow whose only serious handicap as a Foreign Office Minister is a deep ignorance of the issues for which he is responsible at the Overseas Development Administration. Thus it is with dismay, that the 'development' lobby has greeted the Minister's decision to abandon the commitment to 'development education' so painstakingly established by the last Government. The Development Education Fund was set up in 1977 as a belated and modest attempt to reverse an accelerating trend among the British to display (in the words of the Advisory Committee which administered the Fund): 'parochial and introverted attitudes, unsympathetic to a world perspective, clinging to the past and untutored to approach the future constructively.'

The programme was frugal in the extreme. In this financial year the fund will dispose of no more than £600,000 – less than one pound for every thousand pounds which Britain spends annually on overseas development. The money is used to finance the efforts of voluntary agencies, churches, and some local authorities to 'increase understanding here of worldwide economic, social and political conditions . . . and of the implications of these for people in Britain'. Its grants range from £200 towards a sixth form conference to £10,000 for a teachers' training programme at the Institute of Education. Under Judith Hart the programme had been due for rapid expansion – though it would still have languished behind other Western countries like Germany and Sweden, which spend respectively between six and forty times more than we do *per capita* on similar programmes.

Last week the Advisory Committee was dismissed; the Fund will be run down; and the Government will save, according to the unhappy officials at the ODA, the 'infinitesimal' sum of £9 million over the next four years. Mr Marten's backwoodsmanship has provoked a rare display of unity from every major charity (including the big five churches and five main aid agencies). In the boldest language they dare use nowadays, they have appealed publicly to the Government to think again, describing the abolition of the Fund as 'a severe blow' which violates the spirit of the Tory Election Manifesto and Mrs Thatcher's commitment at Lusaka to 'increase information, understanding and appreciation of the Commonwealth among the general public'.

The very concept of 'development' seems to be on the government's chopping block. As next week's White Paper will confirm, Mr Marten has sanctioned cuts throughout the ODA, far more savage than any other spending minister would see fit to endure. Judith Hart persuaded the Labour Cabinet to *increase* real spending on Overseas Development by 6 per cent annually for at least four years; Mr Marten has approved a real *reduction* for this year of at least 5 per cent (assuming an inflation rate of 15 per cent) – and the cuts are destined to continue thereafter. Instead of advancing towards the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GDP spent on overseas aid, Mr Marten is retreating sharply from it.

Within the straitjacket that now confines the ODA, the Minister has served advice on his bewildered officials that he intends to reverse another principle established by the Labour Government: that aid should be directed principally towards the poorest countries. At the insistence (it is said) of Mrs Thatcher, Mr Marten has agreed to transfer funds earmarked from countries like India and Bangladesh to (for example) Turkey, which is one of the richest 'developing' countries but also happens to be on NATO's eastern flank, the security of which is a priority for the Prime Minister. This retreat by the ODA is a victory for those in the Foreign Office who would like all 'aid' to be used merely as a 'political' instrument of foreign policy. Indeed so weakened is Mr Marten's little empire, that it risks being torn apart in the struggle for its funds between the Foreign Office (by which it is now swallowed up) and the Department of Trade which sees 'aid' as a convenient means of bribing the Third World to 'Buy British'.

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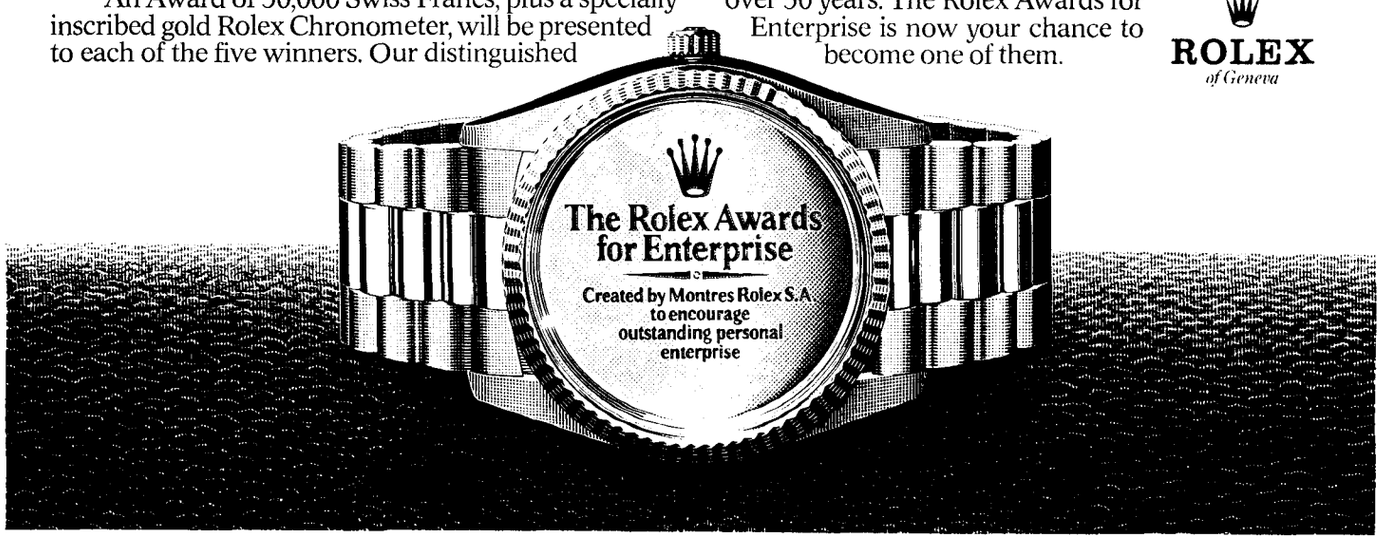

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The Un-affluent Society

ROUGHLY a century ago, Charles Booth alarmed the nation with his first, minutely-detailed accounts of poverty among the British people (ironically, he began with an intention of exposing socialist 'propaganda', which he discovered to be an under-estimate of the problem). Since then, there have been recurrent scandals, and a long 'Butskellite' period in which the consensus view was that poverty was largely eliminated from Britain, and that only mopping-up operations remained. During the last few years, this consensus has been steadily undermined by growing unease about the true extent of poverty – and the possibility that all attacks on it have failed. This week, Professor Peter Townsend publishes a massive report which reveals that more than half of the nation will experience serious poverty during their life-span, and that more than a quarter exist always in a state of poverty or near-poverty. According to Townsend's account the welfare state – even before present-day attacks on it – was doing more to legitimise poverty than to minimise its impact. Here KERRY SCHOTT analyses Townsend's main arguments in text, and PETER KELLNER encapsulates the principal findings of the survey in graphics.*

Poverty in the United Kingdom: A survey of household resources and standards of living. Pelican, £7.95.

THE IMMEDIATE ACCUSATION against Townsend's survey may be that the original investigations date from the latter sixties – the task of analysis having been more complex, in some respects, than that which faced Booth a century ago. But if the material is out of date in any way, it is only by understating the present problem. Not only has unemployment increased throughout the 1970s, but the proportion of elderly people has increased, and so has the number of one-parent families. There have been some improvements in state benefits, and there has been increased employment of women. But neither trend has been enough to compensate for overall economic deterioration.

Townsend's survey material, married-up to contemporary official statistics, produces a terrifying picture of life in modern Britain. Well over half of the people in the country are likely to experience poverty for a substantial period of their lives. And this high chance of experiencing poverty is itself unusually distributed. If you are a manual worker, a woman, a child – or are simply disabled – then you are odds-on to experience poverty. Only a minority of British people can expect to live their lives without an encounter with serious poverty. Nearly half must expect to be heavily and permanently scarred by it. Any attempt to portray poverty as an individual moral failing must therefore reckon with the proposition that the greater part of the British people are somehow morally inadequate.

Figures alone may obscure the human suffering which they are intended to reveal. Therefore, statistical analysis should be preceded by some reminder – from among Townsend's case-study – of the lives of the rich and the lives of the poor. Take 'Mr and Mrs Margood' of Kent, and 'Mr and Mrs Nelson' of Oldham.

Mr and Mrs Margood were 35 when they were interviewed, living in a small town with their two daughters and two sons. They met at university where both were studying economics. Her father was a barrister, and his a highly-skilled manual worker. Their eight-bedroom house was worth about £30,000 in 1968, purchase having been helped by a low-interest loan from Mr Margood's company. His salary was £3,500 (today, it would be necessary to multiply threefold), and he was entitled to six week's holiday, with a pension of two-thirds final salary at 60.

Mr Margood owned shares worth £15,000. His wife had £6,000 in her deposit account and £100,000 in a family trust. Their total income before tax was £10,000 a year (say, £30,000 now).

They acknowledged that life had treated them well. They ran two cars and gave each child £500 a year from a family trust (plus £100 for savings). Mr Margood's father received an allowance of £350. They both entertained when they wished, and visited friends frequently.

MR AND MRS NELSON were also in their mid-thirties when they were interviewed. They lived with their three sons in a four-room council flat in Oldham: close to a canal, overlooking a rubber factory. The flat was afflicted with damp – kept in check by an occasional coal fire in the living room, and by moving a one-bar electric heater from room to room.

Mr Nelson had served a six year apprenticeship as a painter and decorator: he had last been employed as a driver, earning above-average wages. But epilepsy and poor hearing (together with the effect of a blood-clot touching his brain) had made him unemployable for six years past. His doctor had little help to offer.

Mrs Nelson had given up her job as an office cleaner to look after her husband – though susceptible herself to bronchitis and rheumatism. She had to accompany him on all but short walks, and nurse him for the one week in four which he spent in bed recovering from fits.

Their eldest son was very self-conscious about a 'lazy eye', but otherwise in good health. Though not mentally backward, he was at a special school because of reading difficulties. The second son – thin, delicate and intermittently deaf – was suffering from nasal catarrh. He tended to wake at night shouting: 'I can't breathe.' The third son was in good health.

Social life scarcely existed: the children rarely brought friends home to play. Twice a year – in lieu of holidays – Mrs Nelson took the boys for a day trip to her sister in Yorkshire. 'It gives them a good day out. Good air. It is the only holiday they are likely to get.'

Their income was about one-twentieth that of the Margood family – and there were, of course, no assets behind it. Fresh meat was a rarity, and cooked meals were absent for a day or two before payment of Supplementary Benefit. Mrs Nelson described poverty as 'not being able to buy things for the kids . . . I'm hoping things will be better for my kiddies in time to come. I never thought life would be like this.'

There were several follow-up interviews with this family, and in 1972 Mrs Nelson was asked whether they had yet had a summer holiday:

> Oh yes. We saved and saved for weeks . . . Then the time came and we really did go together to see *The Sound of Music.* Oh, it was lovely that opening scene when she was dancing on the mountains and all free. The children each had an ice-cream, and when we left we walked up the High Street and you know that wallpaper shop,

How means tests fail

1976	Numbers eligible (at least)	Percentage take-up
Supplementary benefit	2,000,000	60-65
Free school meals	400,000	60
Rent rebates	500,000 (households)	under 30
Rate rebates	1,450,000 (households)	under 25
Educational maintenance allowances	130,000	under15
School-uniform grants	300,000	under 5
Free welfare milk	450,000	under 2

Camera Press

Townsend's survey demonstrates that many more people fail to obtain means-tested benefits than official figures show. Four years ago the Government estimated that 80 to 85 per cent of children entitled to free school meals received them. The true figure is nearer 60 per cent. Part of the reason for low take-up rates is the sheer complexity of the means-test system: different benefits operate different income and family tests, and some vary widely in operation in different parts of Britain. Educational Maintenance Allowances, for example, are provided at the discretion of local authorities to help children stay at school beyond the minimum leaving age. That discretion operates in very different ways. At last count the average grant in East Sussex was seven times that in Merthyr Tydfil.

Such vagaries, Townsend argues, are part of a wider pattern of confusion and discouragement:

> **The denial or difficulty of access to resources is inherent in all means-tested services and explains under-use ... They are essentially devices which ration and control. There is a *general* discouragement to use means-tested services which is built into their operating rules and administration by a society which sets great store by self-help and thrift.**

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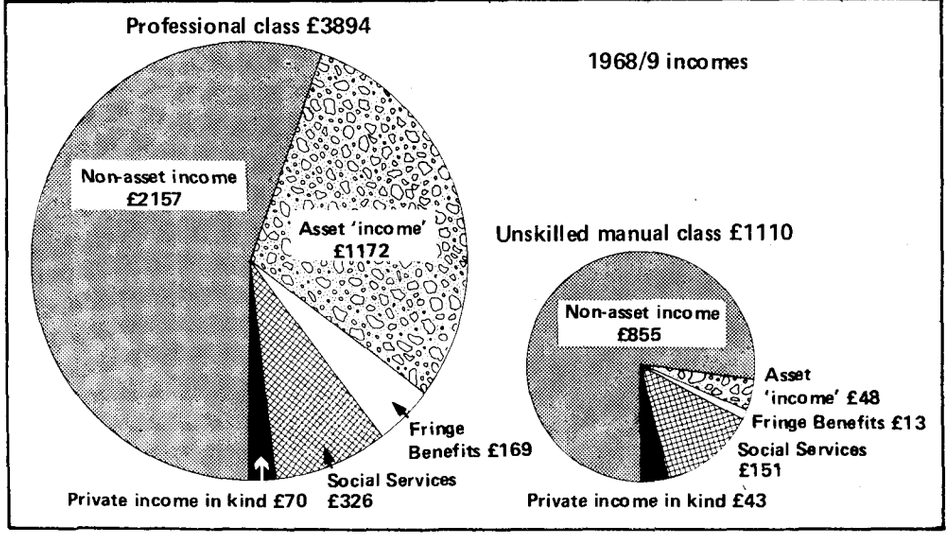
The rich do not just have higher incomes – they also corner other resources to add to their standard of living. Townsend's survey delved into the different components of living standards. It found that in the late 1960s, professional class households received 2½ times the 'non-asset' income as unskilled manual class households. ('Non-asset income' is principally take-home pay together with any state cash benefits each household receives.) But when all other benefits were added in, the differential widened to 3½ to one. The total resources available to professional households was £3,894 a year, compared with £1,110 for unskilled manual households. At today's prices these are equivalent to £12,000 and £3,500 respectively.

The biggest difference lies in the calculation for asset 'income'. In part this reflects the flow of, for example, share dividends. Most of this income, however, derives from the ownership of property: while there is no cash income as such, home ownership contributes to a household's living standards. So Townsend has included a figure for the notional interest on the owner's equity – that is, the value of the property less any outstanding mortgage.

Percentages in poverty in the UK 1968/9

Poverty measure	Percentage of households	Percentage of population	Estimated numbers	
			Household	Population
1. STATE'S STANDARD			mil	mil
In poverty	7.1	6.1	1.34	3.32
on margins of poverty	23.8	21.8	4.50	11.86
2. RELATIVE INCOME STANDARD				
In poverty	10.6	9.2	2.00	5.00
on margins of poverty	29.5	29.6	5.58	16.10
3. DEPRIVATION STANDARD				
In poverty	25.2	22.9	4.76	12.56

Money isn't everything



well, we saw that picture, there, above the fireplace. We counted up the money. If we walked home we could just have enough for it. So next morning I walked down and bought it, and there it's been ever since. When you're fed up you can look at it and it reminds you of *The Sound of Music*.

Mr Nelson died in 1976. He was 43.

Recognising poverty in individual cases is not so hard for anyone who is prepared to look. But measuring the incidence of poverty throughout the country is more difficult, and more abstract. Three different measures of poverty are discussed in Townsend's study – and it is significant that the one used by successive governments appears to give the smallest numbers (see table above).

The state bases its estimates on the Supplementary Benefit basic rates, and on the value-judgments implied in them about the minimum requirements of life. In 1978, for example, it was felt that a man and woman could meet these basic needs on £25.15 a week. Odd, and totally confusing, additions to the basic rate are possible depending on circumstances. But it is clear that this basic rate reflects the state's notion of need, and not necessarily anybody else's. If your sole income amounts to less than, or equal to, the basic rate, you are defined as living in poverty. If your income is between the basic rate and 140 per cent of it – you are said to be in the margin of poverty.

Of course, if the basic rate figure is set very low, the numbers in poverty, so defined, fall rapidly. The Government could thus reduce poverty dramatically by cutting the rate by £3 a week, which may be something Mrs Thatcher has in mind.

A second problem with this definition is that it needs revision with every price-change. Otherwise, the measure simply reflects inflation, and gives no indication of changes in real living standards.

The 'relative income standard' is a simple and frequently used alternative. Household incomes are ranked in order, and compared to the average income of their type. Those incomes which are less than 50 per cent of the average are declared 'poverty incomes' and those between 50 per cent and 79 per cent of the average are declared to be on the 'margins of poverty'.

But any money income definition of poverty must be arbitrary, and such a measure cannot reflect the dispersion of incomes *around* the average. If everybody was clustered near the average this measure could still suggest that large numbers of people were living in 'poverty' even though their standard of living might be very like everyone else's Similarly, a society might have a wide spread of incomes – between subsistence and dazzling wealth – in which case a calculation of numbers below the average income could well understate the problem of poverty. And we know from observation of our own society that many households have command over resources which derives from income other than current income.

Townsend's third measure, the 'deprivation standard', is an attempt to improve on the other two. In addition to direct income, he considers imputed income from capital assets (such as houses) and from benefits received in kind (such as occupational pensions, company cars, and the value of health, education and welfare received from the state).

Whichever way poverty is defined, its extent – as shown in the table opposite – is huge. But the relative-deprivation method gives the most illuminating, and also disturbing picture. The poorest five per cent of households in Townsend's survey had assets whose average value was £31, compared with an average of £28,185 for the wealthiest five per cent: today, after a threefold increase in property valuations, the discrepancy must have widened to £93 against some £85,000.

Employers' fringe benefits are also distributed extremely unequally. Some high-paid employees had benefits worth £200, or as much as £1,000, in imputed cash flow at 1968-9 figures: again, inflation will have widened the gap. More men than women had substantial benefits, and for both sexes benefits rose sharply with earnings. To those that have shall be given: the low-paid receive few if any fringe benefits.

TOWNSEND'S TEAM computed the cost of public services, and their use by different households in the survey. Low-income households, it emerged, received little absolute value from social services delivered in kind:

The Sayings of Père Patriarche

"If you buy a second bottle of wine you liked and it doesn't taste like the first, you've bought the wrong wine."

PÈRE PATRIARCHE

RED & WHITE VIN DE TABLE
BOTTLED IN FRANCE BY PATRIARCHE

For once, don't worry about the wine.

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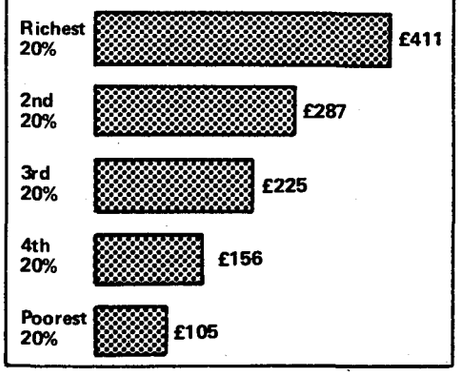
Where subsidies and social services really go



One-tenth of national income is spent by the state in the form of subsidies (such as school meals, council housing and mortgage tax relief) and social services (mainly health and education), leaving aside cash benefits like pensions. Townsend has calculated the notional 'income' of each household in his survey from such social service benefits – generally by assessing the cost to the state of providing them in the late 1960s (e.g., 60p for a visit to the doctor; £132 a year for each comprehensive school pupil).

This social spending is far less redistributive than widely realised. The richest 20 per cent of Townsend's sample – with an average disposable income of £2486 a year (£7500 at today's prices) – had seven times the take-home pay and received four times the value of social service benefits as the poorest 20 per cent. In part this reflects the greater subsidy to middle-class home owners compared with working-class council tenants. But in addition, prosperous families make more use of the NHS (see last week's NS) and keep their children in full-time education longer. Indeed, the structure of subsidies and benefits plays a significant role in consolidating the living standards of the better-off and preserving their privileges for their children.

they were more likely than high-income households to receive no health or welfare benefits (though the benefits, if received, were more likely to be substantial than among high-income households).

> Fewer (low-income households) had educational benefits, and few who had educational benefits had benefits of substantial value.

Briefly, the state is not an effective agent in spreading resources more equitably. According to the survey data, the top 20 per cent of households were receiving 40 per cent of the available non-asset income: addition of imputed cash-flow value of assets sent their share to 44 per cent, leaving 80 per cent of households to get by on 56 per cent of the country's resources. Addition of employers' fringe benefits made the distribution more inequitable, and addition of the imputed value of state services produced no alteration.

Poverty in the United Kingdom argues that a relative-deprivation measure is the most relevant to modern conditions. The essential idea is that the structure of an industrial society defines the needs – including the diet – of its members. There is in each case a 'style of living', expressed objectively in patterns of consumption, through which participation in society is manifested.

A list of 60 'style of living' indicators was built up for the survey, covering diet, clothing, fuel and light, home amenities, housing facilities, immediate physical environment, and social relationships. These can become 'deprivation indicators' when a particular amenity is lacking, or an activity is not participated in. Thus the absence of an indoor lavatory, or of somewhere safe for the children to play, is in each case an indicator of some deprivation. So is an absence of holidays, or an inability to offer friends occasional entertainment.

From particular indicators, an overall score can be built up. And predictably enough indicators like infrequent meat purchases or poor domestic facilities turned out in Townsend's survey to be closely correlated with low incomes, and low command over resources. The team's hypothesis – for which much empirical support has been produced – was that as resource-levels fall, there comes *a point beyond which deprivation is experienced more than proportionately to any additional fall in resources.* Income declines only slowly, but deprivation-indicators accumulate rapidly. This changeover point, worked out for each different type of household, is taken by Townsend to be the level which defines true poverty.

For a family with two children, the change-over today occurs at about £2,500: if incomes falls lower, indices of deprivation accumulate fast. Meat-eating becomes irregular, and diet-management today is difficult without a refrigerator. Visitors to friends and relatives become rare, because transport costs are prohibitive. There is nowhere safe for the children to play, and the home isn't adequately heated. Holidays and birthday presents become rare, or non-existent. There need not be anything spectacular or dramatic about the condition of poverty produced – although outright catastrophe, now, is never far away. Quietly, unnoticeably, the family drifts out of the mainstream of British life, with little prospect of a return.

Of course, all the national findings are extrapolated from a sample survey – but the sample was massive, and carefully-selected. The interviews involved 10,000 individuals in 3,260 households. Of these, some 6,000 individuals in 2,052 households were chosen to represent the nation as a whole, and their demographic characterisitics appear to be the same as those found in other large-scale samples like that used for the government's Family Expenditure Survey. The 'extra' households were selected to obtain more details about the lives of the poor, and these were drawn from low-income constituencies in Belfast, Glasgow, Neath and Salford. The questionnaires used were enormously detailed, and most households spent two to five hours giving answers. (Townsend explains that the huge task of turning the raw data into a coherent account was interrupted by the appointment of his early collaborator, Professor Brian Abel-Smith, as an adviser to the Labour Government.)

NOBODY WILL BE SURPRISED at results which show that those most seriously afflicted by poverty are children and elderly people. But the sheer extent of the problem, on Townsend's measurement, still comes as a shock. Once retirement age is reached, 50 per cent of the population experience poverty, and this rises to 70 per cent or more among manual workers. And roughly 40 per cent of Britain's children are brought up in households at or below poverty-level.

Similarly, it is unpleasant, but not surprising, to find that women are more likely to be poor than men: that one-person households, or those with four or more children, are more likely to be poor. But what does upset expectation is the evidence of the wide geographical distribution of poverty. Contrary to conventional wisdom, it is not concentrated in particular areas.

There are higher proportions of poverty in Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Northwest and Wales. But even in the poorest areas there are many relatively prosperous people. And in the richest areas, Greater London and the Southeast, the poor are numerous.

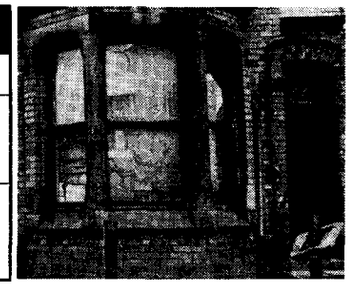
Therefore, attempts to deal with the problem geographically are insufficient. Throwing money at the poorer *regions* is likely to make many prosperous families still more prosperous, increasing differentials within the area, and leaving poverty elsewhere untouched. Briefly, the problem is one of class, not of geography, and any solution must face up to this fact.

Of course the rich, as well as the poor, are always with us: they are, in Townsend's

The true cost of housing

1968 values: all figures in £s

	Council tenant	New home buyer	Home buyer with 5-15 year-old mortgage	Average of all owner-occupiers
Total cost	147	375	268	196
Tax relief	0	–56	–27	–20
Annual 'real' capital gain	0	–102	–87	–94
Net cost	147	217	134	84



Camera Press

Not only do the prosperous have the best housing; they often pay less for it than do council tenants. The table above shows what Townsend found: although home buyers paid out more in total, the financial benefits of home ownership reduced the net cost sharply. Only for recent home buyers with new mortgages did the net cost exceed that of the typical council tenant.

Townsend identified two sources of benefit, mortgage tax relief and 'real' capital gain. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s house prices have tended to rise faster than inflation: only in two or three years has this not happened. On average the difference has been two per cent a year. Townsend has applied this two per cent to the value of each owner-occupied house, as a measure of the extent to which owner occupiers have added to their stock of real financial resources.

In fact, this is a highly conservative way of doing the sums. Anyone with a mortgage 'owns' only part of his house outright – but he keeps the whole of any gain in value. According to Townsend's calculations, if house prices rose in line with inflation there would be no 'real' capital gain – whereas for anyone with a mortgage, inflation itself is the very engine of wealth-creation. For example, anyone who bought a £5,000 home ten years ago with an 80 per cent mortgage, now has an asset worth around £20,000. His £1,000 deposit has grown to an equity stake of £16,000 – a gain of £15,000 in cash, and £13,000 even after allowing for inflation.

When this gearing is taken into account it is probably rare for a home buyer to end up paying anything, net, for his housing, let alone as much as a council tenant.

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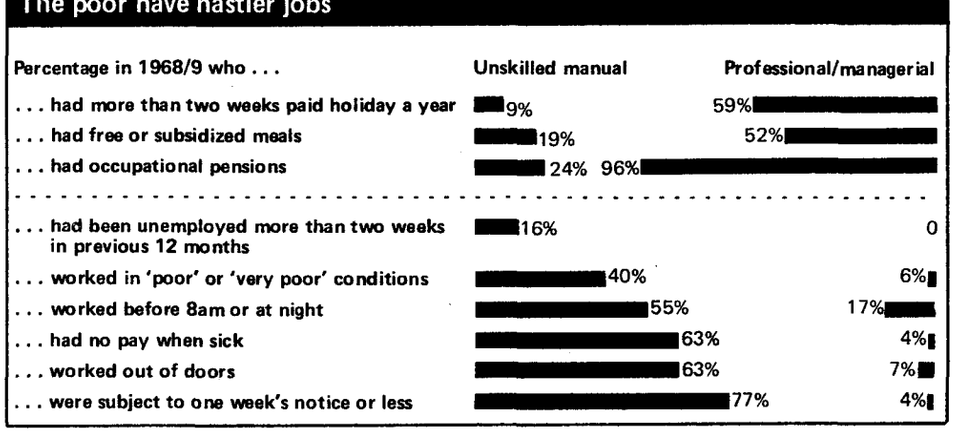
account, the professional and managerial families rather than the old aristocracy and landed gentry. There is a considerable stratum of barristers, civil servants (and journalists) who have acquired affluence in modern Britain: it may be natural for them to imagine that all of the country has fared as well as they have.

So far, the picture displays a prosperous professional class and a lot of young and elderly poor. But there is more to it. About 6.5 million people are disabled, and many of them live in poor households (thalidomide victims account for only about 1 in 1,000 of the handicapped children in the country).

And beyond this is the huge, increasing problem of unemployment. Townsend's massive sample confirms the picture of a hierarchy of jobs, from secure and tenured workers in the Civil Service and other bureaucracies, down to the low-paid who are susceptible to numerous lay-offs – with, at the very bottom, those experiencing lengthy, or indefinite periods of unemployment. The principal causes of unemployment among manual workers are essentially beyond their control: bankruptcies, mergers, and the ups-and-downs of manufacturing markets. Only in exceptional cases had workers been laid off because of incompetence or lack of skill.

The poor have nastier jobs



The extent to which Britain has remained a divided society is indicated by Townsend's findings on working conditions. As a general rule unskilled manual workers are employed by the same enterprises as most managers and professional staff, but they inhabit different worlds of security, convenience, working environment and fringe benefits.

To assess working conditions Townsend compiled a list of ten amenities for indoor workers: sufficient heating in winter; tea or coffee available (whether charged or not); indoor flush WC; washing and changing facilities; place to eat lunch or eat sandwiches; place to keep coat and spare clothes securely; secure place for personal articles; first-aid facilities; possibility of making at least one personal telephone call a day; lighting that the individual can increase or reduce – e.g., over his work.

Townsend assessed the conditions as 'poor' if four or five of these facilities were missing, and 'very poor' if six or more were missing. (There is a different but equivalent list for outdoor workers.) *Townsend found that in the late 1960s 1.9 million people worked in 'very poor' conditions, and a further 2.7 million in 'poor' conditions – 4.6 million in all.* Most of them were badly paid, too.

THE SURVEY PRODUCED no evidence that people remained unemployed because they found it more lucrative than working. But it did show that work is highly unrewarding for large numbers of people: 33 per cent of the poor were part of the work-force, and women, of course, were conspicuously ill-paid. In 1968-69, 73 per cent of full-time women workers, and 12 per cent of men, were earning less than £15 per week (or about £45 in today's money).

And, put at its simplest, the poor have nastier jobs – a theme spelt out in our diagrams. But the sickest of all the paradoxes in the Townsend report is its demonstration that the poor pay more in real terms for their housing than the well-to-do, and they get mostly bad housing for their money. People were asked about their houses, and 22 per cent of them had structural defects: 44 per cent of the country heats only one room in winter, and this, one conjectures, is not an energy-saving programme.

Fewer owner-occupiers experience poor housing, and their real housing cost was the lowest of any group examined, in both absolute terms and relative-to-income terms if they fully-own their house. Mortgages have a high absolute cost initially, but their relative cost is still lower than any other group. The most expensive form of housing is council housing, and the worst housing in terms of conditions is, predictably, the private-rented sector (which has declined considerably since the survey). But it seems that Townsend has actually *under-estimated* the relative advantage of owner-occupiers. Although he accounted for tax concessions, he did not fully account for the capital gains that accrue to house owners with inflation of property values.

Traditionally, the British state attempts to eliminate poverty through Supplementary Benefits (which of course are really 'basic benefits' insofar as the system works at all) and special means-tested benefits. Until quite recently, official ideology confidently asserted that this approach had eliminated all but a few isolated patches of poverty. Townsend's work should complete the demolition of this complacent attitude. Supplementary Benefit levels are set too low to act as a guarantee against poverty, and even if they were there are too many people in need whom the system does not reach. In 1976 the government itself estimated that there were 2.2 million people eligible for Supplementary Benefits but not receiving them.

But take-up of means-tested benefits is often catastrophically worse. About 40 per cent of children eligible for free school meals and free milk do not receive them. Rent and rate rebates reach only 30 per cent or so of those eligible. Official attempts to inform people about their rights, and persuade people to take up benefits have been considerably more muted than the 'anti-scrounging' campaigns of newspapers and politicians.

Overall, the present piecemeal ad-hoc system functions, not so much as a system for combating poverty, but for disguising its extent and legitimising its existence – while providing just enough relief to make social control possible. The method of administration supports the traditional family at the expense of women, and the ancient categories of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor still condition every moral assumption.

POVERTY, TOWNSEND SUGGESTS, is not so much a problem of British capitalism, but an integral attribute of it. And, facing up to this problem only in his last few pages, he ends up on a note of something very like despair. We must, he argues, abolish excessive wealth and excessive incomes, and introduce some more equitable structure – apparently, centrally determined. Unemployment must be abolished, and the power of managers and professionals to manipulate the system must be curtailed. There must be a reorganisation of community service, with a growth in responsibility for local communities, and an abolition of the distinction between owner-occupiers and tenants. 'It would be wrong to suggest, he says, 'that any of this is easy *or even likely*'. It is true that radical change is so implausible, or so near to impossible?

A first difficulty, certainly, is poverty of political consciousness among the poor themselves. Roughly 30 per cent of the poor in Townsend's sample thought that individuals themselves were to blame for poverty: roughly 22 per cent blamed the government, and only 3 per cent thought that industry (whose management failures, arguably, are the chief cause of unemployment) was to blame. Several generations of Labour and trade-union leadership have therefore failed to shift this perception of poverty as a product of personal failing, even though this is not a perception common to all modern industrial societies (see NS 28 September: 'Labour's Culture of Illusions').

But the illusion of individual error is not the same as total inertia, and there is some evidence at least of dissatisfaction among the poor. There are cracks in the system of illusion, through which its destruction can be begun – perhaps the most potent, and fragile illusion is the self-image which the wealthiest people in the country have of themselves. The Townsend interviews showed that a majority of the wealthiest people in the country considered themselves to be 'middle class', imagining themselves to represent some kind of norm, when they are in fact a tiny minority.

Among the young, at least, such delusions can be challenged with some hope of effect.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA
Anthony Barnett

China falls victim to the strategy of its new, powerful ally

Chairman Hua the running dog

AS CHINESE PREMIER Hua Guofeng makes his way towards London (he arrives on Monday) the Western powers are asking themselves whether his nation is a reliable ally. They want to know how deep China's hostility to the USSR really runs and to what extent they can dominate Chinese development. Hua is not a very reliable indicator. Though the first person to combine the two supreme posts of Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and Premier of its government, he is also one of the weaker figures in a group of leaders struggling to contain their differences and changing their line with remarkable speed. They tend to be divided not so much by matters of policy as by their own individual experiences since 1965: there are those who were purged by the Cultural Revolution, those who survived it and those who found themselves promoted. The latter are known colloquially as 'helicopters' due to their vertical ascent through the hierarchy. If Mao Tse-tung was the Great Helmsman, Hua Guofeng is China's Great Helicopter.

But at least this means he is skilled at playing a double game, which will come in useful when he gets to England. His hosts will be plying him with expensive and not particularly efficient Harrier Jump-Jets, for deployment against the USSR across the steppes of Asia. His delegation will meanwhile be inquiring about a naval version, which Peking needs in order to gain control of the waters of Southeast Asia. Hua also has an important PR function to fulfil: a 'surprise' announcement of a royal tour to the Great Wall seems all too likely.

However, this is small change compared with the stakes currently at play. China and the West do not entirely see eye to eye. Peking believes it can best further its interests by pursuing a policy that will exacerbate relations between the West and the Soviet Union. The United States, on the other hand, sees a deepening of the Sino-Soviet dispute as the best way to preserve its own superiority. Each party wishes to draw the other into a conflict with Moscow and hopes that it will be the one to benefit most. When Hua attacked Soviet 'hegemonism' on his first day in France, his hosts were pleased in so far as he was the one to express hostility, but embarrassed in so far as they were associated with it.

A complicated three-way struggle is now taking place. Its focal point today – as it has been for the last two decades – is Southeast Asia, and Indochina in particular. All three, the US, China and the USSR, have spent vast sums and suffered serious political crises as a result of their involvement in the affairs of Vietnam. They have done so not out of any disinterested concern for the long-suffering people of that country, but because each of the three has been anxious to fight out a relationship with both of the other two. It has not been simply a struggle for predominance in an important geographical position. As the Vietnamese under Ho Chi Minh fought for unity and independence, none of the three powers wished to see the other two help decide the outcome (which would shift the whole balance of the region) to the exclusion of itself. China did not want to see a US-Soviet agreement that would have completed its containment. The USSR did not want a Sino-US understanding that would exclude it from Southeast Asia. The United States did not want a Sino-Soviet condominium extended over Indochina. It was a fear of these possible 'negative consequences' of standing idle, more than any positive ambition, that prompted the massive outside interventions into Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. And it still does today. It is not an accident that the *entente* between China and the West began at the time of Nixon's Vietnam diplomacy; nor that the even closer liaison forged by Carter and Brzezinski with Deng Xiaoping followed the open rupture between Pol Pot's Cambodia and Vietnam, and decisively contributed to Peking's assault upon Hanoi.

"Vietnam shows anxiety over Nixon's visit to China. We have provided explanations. If she cannot figure it out for the moment, just let her watch the development of the truth."
(Chou En-lai, Internal Party Report, December 1971)

"The territory of China reaches as far southward as the James Shoals, near Borneo of Malaysia."
(Foreign Minister Huang Hua, Internal Foreign Policy Address, 30 July 1977)

"The historic meeting between the Chinese people's great leader and teacher, Chairman Mao Tsetung and Comrade Pol Pot in Peking in 21st June 1975 ushered in a new stage in the friendly relations between our two Parties and two countries and had a far reaching significance. Following Chairman Mao's teachings, we will spare no effort to further strengthen the friendly relations and cooperation between our two Parties and two countries."
(Hua Guofeng, at Pol Pot's banquet in Peking, 2 October 1977)

"This is not the ending of a war. It is the beginning of a bigger war."
(Foreign Minister Huang Hua, in talk to US American scholars as Chinese forces withdrew from Vietnam, March 1979)

"We want to be our own masters. We do not want to be the tools of expansionists and ambitious despots to achieve modernisation. We want a modernisation of the people's lives and people's democracy. If we do not have this fifth modernisation the four other modernisations are no more than a new fraud."
(Wei Jingsheng, wallposter, March 1979)

THE AIM of the Carter administration has been to urge China to play out a *regional* policy while the United States remains 'globally engaged'. While supporting China against Vietnam, the US really hopes Peking will direct its hostilities northwards, to remain a massive, antagonistic front line against the USSR. This will impose major military costs upon Moscow and a catastrophic burden upon the Chinese. Washington would also like to see China heavily indebted to the West, allowing multinational companies to reap profits from its giant markets without incurring its overhead costs. These two aims, military and economic, fit together nicely.

However, there is little reason to doubt that China's leaders do not wish to be confined to a regional role. They want to become a great power capable of dealing with Moscow and Washington on equal terms on all global issues. Rather than spoiling for war with the USSR, they intend to win predominance in Southeast Asia – and their territorial claims to the strategically crucial South China Sea (NS 23 February 1979) make this evident enough. Japan depends on oil from the Middle East and needs its trade with Europe: both pass through the South China Sea. If Peking were to achieve its territorial ambitions, Japan would be virtually under its thumb, no matter how substantial its economy. China's claims have been described as 'absurd' and indeed so they would be if they were not seriously held by some of the most powerful figures in Peking.

Arming China thus represents a significant danger to the West. Not only does Peking wish to replace America in Southeast Asia, but there is also a chance that the People's Republic and the USSR may eventually come to an understanding. After all, China remains a Communist state. The weakness of US policy today is that it pivots on the Sino-Soviet conflict, which ultimately rests outside its control. What is to stop the two major Communist countries, currently engaged in state-to-state negotiations, from coming to terms? One factor may be that the USSR, like the United States, wants to see China confined to a regional role. But if in this respect Soviet and American interests coincide, they diverge completely on the type of regional power each wishes China to become. The Soviet Union hopes to see a pacific rather than a belligerent China emerge, absorbed in the gigantic task of stable development. In this respect Moscow's wishes, however self-interested, happen to coincide with those of the Chinese people.

China's leaders may soon choose whether they too want this, or whether they prefer to continue their efforts to become a world power as soon as possible. In 'principle' they no longer have any significant differences with the USSR. During the Cultural Revolution, when party-to-party relations were broken off by Mao Tse-tung, Moscow was excoriated for its 'revisionism' and 'social imperialism'. These were characterised, China claimed, by the Soviet Union's perfidious attempts to collude with US imperialism; by its willingness to invade socialist countries; by the existence of a routinised Party bureaucracy; by an army that relied on a strategy of firepower rather than people's war; by the existence of material incentives, examinations and privileges; and by willingness to accept credits from the capitalist West. None of these charges could be levelled today, since they all apply equally to Peking. As China brings itself into line internally, both the USSR and the People's Republic stand to gain economically. Chinese textiles – blocked from America – could find a ready market in the USSR which badly needs cheap, quality consumer goods. Soviet factory equipment, unlike the West's, is already compatible with existing Chinese plant.

It is on the role of Vietnam, not on domestic differences, that Moscow and Peking are at loggerheads. Their talks in Moscow stalled last month before they had even begun – and disagreements over the agenda were not

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merely procedural: the Chinese delegation wanted to discuss Indochina, in effect to negotiate over its fate, while the Russians wanted to keep to strictly bilateral matters.

If the Peking leaders feel themselves 'encircled' by the USSR in Vietnam (a theme echoed by the Western press) this is not because China is in fact being encircled militarily, as it was by the United States after 1950, but because China's own policy pushed Vietnam into reliance upon the USSR in 1978. Before that time, Hanoi certainly utilised Soviet aid to conduct a policy independent of China; but it also used the latter's support to give it freedom from Moscow's directives. By 1976 both the big Communist states were angered by Hanoi. At the reception that year to celebrate the October Revolution, Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong almost walked out of the Soviet Embassy in Hanoi, having made it clear he would negotiate with the French as an alternative source of aid. Two months later Soviet leader Suslov apparently left early from the Vietnamese Fourth Party Congress after Hanoi had declined to join COMECON (a move which would have antagonised China completely). At the same Congress, pro-Chinese elements were dismissed from the Vietnamese leadership. Hanoi was seeking (over-optimistically perhaps) a quadrapartite programme of assistance for the country's reconstruction – from the Soviet bloc, China, Third World countries (such as India), and the capitalist West.

It was when Pham Van Dong was in France in April 1977, negotiating for a steel mill which the USSR had apparently declined to construct, that Pol Pot launched the first major attacks into South Vietnam and Deng Xiaoping made his comeback in Peking. Together, the two torpedoed Vietnam's post-war programme, as Deng tried to exploit Pol Pot's campaign of aggression in order to impose China's own claims on Vietnamese sovereignty.

BUT WHO WAS PLAYING WHOSE GAME? Back in 1965, Zbigniew Brzezinski (now Carter's national security adviser) floated the idea in *New Leader* magazine that it would benefit the United States to have Soviet troops stationed in North Vietnam. This, he argued, would enable the Americans to conduct bilateral negotiations with the Russians over the heads of the Vietnamese and to the exclusion of the Chinese. Peking cited Brzezinski's article in a major policy statement in November 1965, as proof of a 'collusion' being instigated by the two great powers, thereby justifying China's refusal to collaborate with Moscow against the United States in Vietnam. Paradoxically, when Deng purchased US recognition in 1978 by conceding on Taiwan, cutting aid to Hanoi and attempting to isolate the Soviet presence in Southeast Asia with US support, he helped to create on a larger scale the very situation which Peking feared in 1965. Not only has China now been substituted for the United States in attacking Vietnam, but the USSR had been substituted there for the United States in containing China.

Vietnam has been the double victim of China's attempts to become the US of Asia; and Cambodia has twice been sacrificed by Washington and Peking in their successive wars against Vietnam. But China has been a victim of another kind: its leaders have been led by the nose into their present *impasse*. Since 1975, when its position was potentially very strong, China has been reduced to a point where its main outpost of influence in Southeast Asia is Pol Pot's lamentable army, which is apparently on the verge of annihilation.

If the Vietnamese now sweep away the Khmer Rouge, how will Peking respond? The question is being asked of Hua's delegation in Europe. China has already closed to air traffic the routes over the international waters south of the Paracel islands in the South China Sea. This may be the precursor of a new attack on the disputed territory – possibly even on the Spratley islands, which lie close to the Philippines and Malaysia and which are now occupied (in part) by the Vietnamese.

The Western powers want to see China frustrated: prudent enough not to attack, angered enough to take the bait of expensive weapons, reckless enough to overburden itself with credit from the capitalist world. This would be the most damaging outcome of all, for China and for socialists everywhere. Lopsided 'modernisation' in the People's Republic could create such a structural imbalance between town and countryside in China that it would be lamed for generations. The government there has just announced that the *per capita* national product of its thousand million citizens is little over $150 a year. Probably an underestimate, it remains a stunning index of the task ahead. If Peking concentrates all its resources, doubtless it could create the military and technical apparatus of a modern power. But it cannot do this and create a moderately decent standard of life for all its people within a generation.

This crisis of priorities is compounded by another major test facing the Chinese leaders. They are attempting to introduce a limited, bureaucratic form of legal process, which is not dissimilar from that already in operation in other Communist states, but which represents a considerable improvement on the terrors of the Cultural Revolution. Can the leadership implement and preserve this advance while at the same time containing it, so that the State bureaucracy itself is not fundamentally challenged? Far from breaking the spirit of the Chinese people, the Cultural Revolution undermined discipline in the civilian sector and massively increased popular disillusionment with official politics. How much faith, for example, will be placed in a leader like Hua who officially regards the events since 1965 as a 'calamity', yet patently remains their creature? China is committed to the equivalent of crash, primary industrialisation and 'de-Maoisation' at the same time. To add to this the punitive burden of all-round military modernisation seems reckless indeed. It is not a coincidence that Wei Jingsheng, China's first 'modernised' political prisoner, should have been jailed for passing information about Chinese losses in the Vietnam invasion – in effect an anti-war protest. The interests of the Chinese people and the Chinese People's Army no longer coincide. Which is one of the reasons why the British Government hopes, despite the risks involved, to supply the latter.

Portugal's democracy in danger

Brian Trench writes from Lisbon: James Callaghan is expected in Lisbon next Tuesday, to attend a two-day session of the Bureau of the Socialist International. The meeting has been scheduled since November last year, but the Socialist Party will now be using it to maximum advantage in the run-up to the general and local elections, which take place on 2 and 16 December respectively. Callaghan's arrival is heralded on the front page of the PS weekly *Socialist Action*, but in fact he will not be there. Willy Brandt, Francois Mitterand and Felipe Gonzales will almost certainly show, but the British Labour Party gives the occasion less weight than other Socialist International affiliates: it is sending MPs Joan Lestor and Ian Mikardo, Alex Kitson of the Transport and General Workers' Union and Jenny Little of the TUC International Department.

They will find Mario Soares in a mood of 'ferocious optimism' which is impressing political commentators not notably sympathetic to him or his party. The PS leader has done two long-weekend tours of the countryside and found in the party activists 'a dynamism, a spirit of militancy and a vigour which, while not a surprise, has frankly impressed me'. The Socialist Party's private poll is still being processed, but early indications are of increasing support for the party.

It is certain, however, that the Socialist Party faces a tougher fight than it did at the last Assembly elections in 1976, when it was well ahead of the nearest rival with 35 per cent of the votes cast. The best that it can hope for is a second 'non-party' government under the present Prime Minister, Maria Lurdes de Pintassilgo, but more closely tied to the PS than the present one.

The recently formed Democratic Alliance of Liberals (PSD) and Conservatives (CDS) will certainly poll more votes than the socialists. The PS, in turn, rules out completely any suggestion of a Left Union with the Communist Party: Soares is convinced that the right-wing coalition is unstable and continues to hope for some post-election arrangement with the PSD.

The Socialist Party proudly claims credit for the country's good relations with the United States, underlined by last week's sod-cutting for a new American Embassy in Lisbon – a 'gesture of confidence in the future for a democratic Portugal', said Ambassador Bloomfield. The party defends Portugal's increasing involvement in NATO and recalls that the Soares government of 1976-77 negotiated the controversial loans from the IMF which have helped improve the balance of payments. It actively advocates the EEC and aims for stability in Portugal through integration into the institutions of the West.

Like the Communist Party, with whom it shares little else, the Socialist Party believes that the democratic gains since 1974 could be in danger if the right-wing alliance makes substantial gains in the elections. Not because the leaders of the alliance's two main components are themselves anti-democrats, says International Secretary, Rui Mateus, but because their government programme would lead towards greater instability. Mateus cites their certain call for the President, General Romalho Eenes, to resign and their commitment to referenda on constitutional changes. He might also have added the acceleration of the confiscation, with police backing, of herds and land from co-operatives and collective farms for return to private proprietors. The reverberations are continuing from the September killings of two farm workers by the National Guard, but the Democratic Alliance is proposing a celebration of the force's achievements on 25 November in the main area of agrarian reform, the Alentejo.

The Socialist Party wants to save Portugal from what it calls 'bi-polarisation' between Right and Left. Parliamentarism and pluralism have to be secured first, says Rui Mateus, before deep social reforms can be achieved. Just what kind of threat to those things the Democratic Alliance represents may be judged when its leaders visit London in ten days' time to see Mrs Thatcher.

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White politics: the limits of change

In this, his second article on South Africa STEVEN LUKES reports on the attitudes in the white population.

BRIGADIER COETZEE, Soweto's CID Chief, interviewed in a radio programme about crime in Soweto, said, '. . . one must remember that these people are by nature violent. They grew up in that way. And especially when this drinking comes into it, with their nature, they they are actually very dangerous.' Arrie Paulus, general secretary of the white Mine Workers Union, which is fighting a losing battle against black advancement in the mines, recently told a journalist, 'You have to know a black. He wants someone to be his boss. They can't think quickly. You can take a baboon and learn him to play a tune on the piano, but it's impossible for himself to use his own mind to go on to the next step.' Mr Thys van Lingen, National Party leader in the Natal Provincial Council, told the Party Congress, 'If any of you have objections, don't have an accident after 4 p.m. near Ladysmith, or you could be attended by black theatre staff in the local hospital.' A student heckler (said to be Rhodesian), at a meeting addressed by the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, shouted, 'What is it like as an outsider to observe the human race?' And Fanie Jacobs, Professor of Law at Potchefstroom University, a 'worried nationalist', adviser to Connie Mulder and leader of an academic revolt against the Government's new-look nationalism, genially explained to me his reasons for thinking that any relaxation of social apartheid was a threat to white survival. We had talked for some time and Professor Jacobs leant forward, confidentially: 'You see,' he explained, 'and this is something not often talked about openly, they . . . *smell* different from us.'

These attitudes are widespread in South Africa. Little inhibits their expression, in words or actions. No one is surprised to read of black teenagers dying in an open truck of 'labourers happily returning home on a fourteen-hour trip through blizzard conditions in the eastern Free State', whose white driver said he had 'no idea it was cold enough for people to die of cold'; or of the wine farmer, churchgoer and respected elder of Slanghoek in the eastern Cape who was sentenced to one year's imprisonment (raised to three on appeal, after intervention by the South African Council of Churches) for chaining a black boy to a post for two days and beating two adult workers until one died (as they say locally, 'before you can farm you must learn to beat people up'); or of the immediate reaction of Hendrik Schoeman, Minister of Agriculture, to a newspaper report that he employs child labour and pays very low wages, which was to sack 400 workers (a decision he later revoked). Such cases are, it is true, publicised and, where illegal, some may be brought to court. But they are only extreme forms of a routine racism that pervades the society and has been systematically encouraged by the officially-approved education and political ideology of the last 30 years.

Of course, such racism takes many less virulent and more subtle forms, seeping into the consciousness and shaping social relationships. Blacks are screened out of the social world. A lady in the old mining town of Pilgrims Rest told us of her caring, cohesive community: 'We are one hundred and fifty souls here.' Then, after a pause, she added, 'European souls, that is.' An official leaflet of Potchefstroom University states: 'The Potchefstroom University of Christian Higher Education is not an exclusive but a public institution: its doors are wide open to all European students.' Black townships are invisible, set back from main roads, often unsignposted. There is, moreover, a distinctive voice in which whites routinely address blacks, a voice which does not distinguish between people and situations, rougher, louder and firmer than usual, a voice of which the speaker is normally unaware. And whites, trying against the odds to have normal relations with blacks, are recognisably self-conscious of doing so: if you were to overhear a girl inviting a man to tea on the other side of a library bookcase, the over-solicitous tones would immediately tell you she was addressing a black man. It does not take long for the seepage to occur; recent immigrants are soon infected. We met an articulate, self-aware Frenchman, an anarchist *gauchiste* during the May Events, then a schoolteacher, now running a restaurant in the Cape, who was horrified one day by finding himself insulted by working for an Indian.

CERTAINLY MUCH has changed since the early days of Nationalist rule: crude, biologically-based racial domination defined by skin-colour was replaced by the ideology of cultural or 'national' differences finding expression in separate ethnically-based political units. (Thus in 1973 the present Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, said that 'discrimination based solely on a man's skin cannot be defended'.) Now, increasingly, there is more and more talk of 'mutual respect', 'good neighbourliness' and unity against external threats. The National Party's own constitutional proposals, for example, speak of 'co-operative self-determination for the white, Coloured and Indian national communities in their common homeland; and, for the urban blacks, local autonomy and an improved quality of life, as members of self-determining nations centred in their separate homeland-states.' No longer is it offically proclaimed that the black man is inferior, to be kept, as far as possible, apart in all spheres and denied equal rights. Such talk is now the hallmark of Dr Andries Treurnicht, currently immobilised by his support for the Prime Minister, of the 'worried nationalists', who stayed away from the polls in recent by-elections, mainly workers and farmers who share the views of Professor Jacobs and Dr Mulder, and of the far-right Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) which gained substantially as a result.

The official rhetoric, by contrast, lays all its stress on 'cooperation' and 'development' as applied to the various national 'groups'. (The Department of Bantu Administration and Development changed its title to 'Plural Relations' and then to its present 'Cooperation and Development'). How this rhetoric works can be seen clearly in discussions with Afrikaner intellectuals. I spoke at Afrikaner universities about 'liberalism and its critics', with the aim of discovering just how critical of it *they* were. They were courteous, serious, rather grim but willing to talk in a guarded sort of a way. At the Rand Afrikaans University I discovered disagreement as to whether liberalism is an alien ideology, unsuited to South African soil, or whether, rather, South Africa is currently implementing basic liberal values (freedom, individual dignity, equality of opportunity, self-determination) in its own way. I found agreement, however, that liberalism failed to give due weight to the central and overwhelming importance of the 'group' as against the 'individual' and that liberals, in the South African context, were seeking to 'force' integration on unwilling participants. An economics professor suggested that the 'homelands' policy was to be understood as a restoration of individuals to their 'natural' groups after the 'artificial' intervention of the British. Only at Potchefstroom did I hear, in a halting question from a student, the suggestion that liberalism is really a form of communism, and from a professor the alarming doctrine that Calvinist principles dictate that all governments must always be obeyed in all circumstances.

Two arguments that were advanced struck me as crucial: that blacks have no more reason to complain that they lack political rights than would a Canadian or Mexican at being unable to vote in a United States election; and that migrant labourers from the 'homelands' are treated analogously to Turks in Western Germany. Underlying both arguments is the clear assumption that blacks are indeed 'foreigners' who can be expected to 'cooperate', through their labour and the friendly policies of their 'states', and whose 'development' can be enhanced by generous 'foreign aid' and 'development projects' on which, indeed, some of those very academics were working.

Interestingly, both these arguments were advanced by Prime Minister P. W. Botha in a recent interview with *Der Spiegel*. The whole thrust of his ruthless attempt to re-orient the National Party's policies is towards 'survival' in a world of growing international menace and hostile black neighbours while retaining Afrikaner Nationalist control of the situation. ('We must,' he recently said, 'adapt or we will die'.) This entails modernising and refining the principles of apartheid; abandoning what he calls 'oppression and a racial policy of hate' and eliminating as far as possible the 'unnecessary hurtful discrimination' that has given apartheid such a bad name, while dividing and exporting blacks into 'national' units that will form part of an economically and, above all, militarily viable unity, extending beyond the Republic to encompass the whole of Southern Africa. This hoped-for unity he calls (coining an astronomical metaphor) a 'constellation of states', uniting all the 'nations' in their 'survival struggle' against terrorism and marxism, under the hegemony of the Afrikaners. ('I know', he has said, 'I can get these people to stand with me against the hell of terrorism . . . must I keep insulting them while they are fighting alongside me?')

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Within 'white' South Africa, this means an alliance between Afrikaners, Indians and Coloureds (which the proposed partners increasingly reject) which deprives blacks of any citizenship rights there. Outside it, it means client black states, ruled by pliant elites, functioning as labour reservoirs, exporting migrant labour and importing unproductive and unemployed people, totally dependent on development aid. As for the urban blacks, the Prime Minister told *Der Spiegel*, they will be given help to 'uplift themselves', but they must be allowed *(sic.)* to retain their bonds with their 'national states'.

This, the Prime Minister's 'total strategy', devised with his generals and carried out in close consultation with them, is seen as a response to the no less total strategy of South Africa's enemies. As one of them explained to me, this means something new: a planned and coordinated attack on all fronts – psychological, economic, political, military. It means countering threats to demoralisation, as evidenced by rising emigration figures of crucial professionals. It means, as General Malan, Chief of the Defence Forces, has put it, 'an unprecedented economic flexibility to shift back and forth along a sliding scale between a war and a peace economy, according to prevailing priorities.' It means constitutional engineering, extensive 'homeland consolidation' and either suppressing, creating or, where possible, co-opting non-white elites and leaders. And it means comprehensive military mobilisation, since the white man alone cannot possibly protect the borders.

In terms of white politics, it probably means that the National Party will lose support on the *verkrampte* right to the HNP, Dr Mulder and, if he should make a break, Dr Treurnicht, though it is doubtful that the loss will be great (a recent study shows that a majority of Nationalist voters are prepared to support their leader even if he acts in ways they neither understand nor approve). At the same time it is wooing the English-speaking business community, whose symbol, Harry Oppenheimer, has been responding positively. But the central meaning of the total strategy for the overall structure of power is unmistakable: a strengthening of white domination, under the control of Afrikaner nationalism, on the basis of the substructure of apartheid I described last week, freezing the massive inequalities it implies, and all in the name of 'cooperation and development'. The ideology has changed; the reality persists. As the General put it to me, the solution lay in the various peoples of South Africa living together. 'By living together', I countered, 'You mean living separately?' He agreed, without the flicker of a smile, unaware, I suspect, of any irony.

Peter Kennard

AS FOR THE WHITE opposition, it is fragmented and, as a political force, quite ineffective. The limits of Afrikaner dissidence are narrowly set, as can be seen from the loyal Afrikaner press (devoted to 'independence-in-commitment'). Those who speak out are banned or harassed. An Afrikaner law professor, speaking courageously on behalf of black political prisoners' rights (their right to pursue advanced study has been withdrawn) is threatened. An academic at Potchefstroom who, in the wake of Steve Biko's death, signed a liberal document and spoke against abuses, was visited by her priest and threatened with ostracism. Conformity within the ethnic fold is maintained by strong, orchestrated pressures.

The liberals of old are in disarray. Many have emigrated and many others contemplate doing so. Some are active, as lawyers or in voluntary bodies. They contribute immeasurably to humanising a brutal and oppressive reality. But they lack any political weight and some have drawn surprising conclusions from their liberal principles: Alan Paton now declares, 'universal suffrage and a unitary state imposed from without is not – for me – compatible with the liberal ideal.' White students are active within their organisations, but they are hemmed in by official surveillance and the new separatism of black students. Other whites engage in work with independent black unions but find themselves subject to prosecution and banning. And white radicals who have engaged in underground activities have landed up in jail with very long sentences, or have been pressed into giving evidence for the State, sometimes against blacks, or are banned and (the final victory of the system) consumed by guilt at their failure.

The only organised opposition on the white 'left' is the Progressive Federal Party, with 17 MPs, the limits of whose role are set by the overwhelming electoral power of the National Party, by the likelihood that the main opposition will coalesce on the right in the years to come, and the law against multi-racial political parties. The PFP is increasingly forced into urging the Nationalists along a 'progressive' path – calling a 'National Convention' to create a new constitution, with 'recognised' and 'effective' black leaders, dismantling imposed ethnic divisions, sharing, rather than dividing, power. Its hopes of persuading the Nationalists on any of these points seem negligible and its own practice is, in many ways, contradictory. It has opposed universal franchise and now opposes majority rule within a unitary state, advocating an eventual federal solution, to be agreed at the National Convention, but by the time the National Party could be induced to agree to such a Convention, the federal solution would no longer be an option. It advocates dialogue, yet its own relations with blacks are not very good (though it is 'liaising' with Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha party). In Durban I attended a political seminar, largely devoted to discussing the possibility of just such a dialogue, to which no blacks had been invited, and at which only one black person was present. Dr Motlana told me that he saw the PFP as basically irrelevant: the problems of South Africa, he said, should be left to the nationalists, on both sides.

The ultimate contradiction of the PFP, however, symbolises the whole potential tragedy of whites in South Africa today. Its entire policy is based on giving a positive answer to the question posed by its new, dynamic and highly intelligent leader Dr van Zyl Slabbert: 'Assuming that the majority of whites wish to move away from white domination or could be persuaded to support such a move, how could they be reassured that such a move would not inevitably lead to their own domination or would not entail massive disruption and instability for South Africa?' The PFP and its leader are committed to accepting the assumption in the question and offering the hope that an evolutionary path of 'peaceful and constitutional change' from 'a state of dominance to one of shared participation' is available: without that hope, Dr Slabbert confessed to me, the Afrikaners 'will break this place up'. He may be right. Prime Minister Botha told an interviewer in 1977, 'If we are forced by irresponsible people to fight, they will regret the day they started, because we won't stop then like we did in Angola.' But is this hope in evolutionary change justified? Some say that Dr Slabbert will be South Africa's last white Prime Minister. Some sectors of monopoly capital, and in particular Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation, have backed the PFP as a possible vehicle of change that could promote a 'peaceful atmosphere' for the business world. But the party's narrow base in the white electorate makes its hopes of a social-democratic scenario implausible; it has as little prospect of enlightening Nationalist voters as of converting their leaders. I detected a note of real desperation in Dr Slabbert's optimism.

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ITALY
Tana de Zulueta

Delays in trying suspect terrorists are corrupting Italian politics

A germ of rebellion in the PCI

THE PADUA HISTORY professor who was shot at last month by two youths on a Vespa was not caught off his guard. Just as one of them pulled out a pistol to fire at him, Angelo Ventura ducked and fired his own ·38 calibre revolver straight at the retreating motorbike. Minutes later, when a startled craftsman stepped out of his shop to find out what was happening, all he could see was a man lying on the cobbled street. 'Call the police,' snapped the professor.

Ventura was lucky: he escaped with no more than two broken toes. Later in the day, with a telephone call to the local paper, the 'Combatant Communist Front', one of Italy's innumerable self-proclaimed terrorist groups, claimed the attack. Ventura, so the terrorists claim, is above all guilty of 'treachery': collaborating as a witness in the judiciary inquiry being carried out by the local magistracy into the terrorist violence which has shaken Padua and the entire Veneto region in the past three years. In just one night in April this year there were 27 bombings, 17 of which were in Padua. Ventura is the fifth Padua victim in three years: three were shot in the legs, while two university colleagues of his were beaten with iron bars in March. Ventura expected it: 'I knew that sooner or later they would shoot at me,' he says. He had often been threatened.

The names of the terrorist groups keep changing, but according to the investigative magistrate Piero Calogero, the inspiration for all this violence comes from the ultra-Left 'Workers' Autonomy', a single but diffuse political movement which draws its sympathisers from Italy's students and unemployed, and counts on quite a few discontented workers as well. The movement, which has been steadily gaining strength in recent years, does not recognise itself in any political party or national union. It is not only autonomous, but above all deeply antagonistic to the Italian Communist Party (PCI).

The communists are just as intolerant of this virulent opposition to the left of them. They flatly condemn the students who threaten professors during exams or raid the university canteen as 'fascists'. Workers' Autonomy, however, gained strength and influence in the wake of the PCI's alliance with the governing Christian Democrats (DC), which came to an end in January this year and was followed by elections in which the communists lost four million of their votes, their first major setback since the war. With little to show for three years propping up DC governments, the PCI has moved back into opposition but the party secretary, Enrico Berlinguer, has not given up his long-term project of a grand coalition, the famous 'historic compromise'. Meanwhile disaffection to the left is palpable and all too many believe that the communists have literally sold out.

Nowhere is this feeling stronger than in Padua. It was here that on 7 April Calogero, a magistrate known for his communist sympathies, rounded up and issued warrants for the arrest of all the main ideologues of Workers' Autonomy. First in line was Antonio Negri, distinguished 46-year-old political science professor at the University of Padua, visiting lecturer at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, accused of being no less

Antonio Negri in prison

than the head of the Red Brigades. Also wanted is the physics lecturer Franco Piperno, now awaiting the decision of a French court about his extradition following his arrest in Paris last month. Several members of his staff were arrested along with Negri, as well as the head of the free 'Radio Sherwood' and a Padua journalist. A few days later the main defendants were accused of organising the kidnap and murder in 1978 of the Christian Democrat Party President, Aldo Moro. Negri and the journalist, Giuseppe Nicotri, in particular, were accused of having made the last phone calls to Moro's family the day before the politician's corpse was found in the boot of a parked car in a street in central Rome.

THE CHARGES WERE so serious that public opinion was stunned. 'We have iron proof,' the judges assured those who remained incredulous. Five months later, according to the defence lawyers, this iron proof has yet to be seen. 'Of course,' says the magistrate Calogero, 'in an inquiry of this kind if one is expected to immediately demonstrate the material connections with the crime, then the investigations might immediately come to a halt.' Meanwhile the carefully dosed leaks which the magistracy has passed on to the press show that they have been systematically questioning Negri on his own political writings. These densely-argued works are the theoretical foundation of Workers' Autonomy. A marxist, but in open dissent with all communist parties, Negri rejects both the 'real' socialism of the Eastern Bloc and the Eurocommunists' attempts to gain social democratic respectability. He believes that the 'social states' of late capitalist society are already ripe for revolution, the destruction of the state and a transition to real communism. It is not the proletariat but the 'social worker' who has rejected the work ethic and the ever-growing masses of unemployed who will bring about the revolution, not by head-on military conflict, but by corroding the state with their diffuse 'mass illegality'.

Many of the theorists of the 'sabotage' of the state (and not just in Italy) believe that Italy, with its unabated terrorist violence, from the military efficiency of the Red Brigades to the improvised groups who almost nightly lob a bomb, is going to be at the forefront of a coming 'social' revolution. At times Negri's exaltation of violence is almost mystical. Sabotage, he claims, has a 'historic' role: 'never so much as in this continuous activity of sharp-shooter, saboteur, moonlighter, deviant and criminal which I am now living.' Yet it is the realisation that this trial may have been mounted more against a set of political ideas than against any real gunslinging terrorists which has gradually been poisoning Italian political life.

The trial has succeeded, for the first time since the invasion of Hungary in 1956, in dividing the PCI. As though extirpating some ancestral guilt (Negri is, after all, a self-confessed marxist revolutionary and Piperno is an ex-party member) the communists are the most ferocious detractors of Workers' Autonomy and the most enthusiastic supporters of the trial against its leaders. The communist papers all praised the 'judiciary innovation' which permitted Calogero, so they claim, to lay his hands on the brains behind the Red Brigades. With the passage of time, however, these innovations have begun to look rather high-handed. A group of left-wing magistrates has recently warned that the frightfully serious charges, including armed insurrection against the state (a charge which had not even been brought against the Red Brigades themselves) might be being used as a means of holding the accused in jail without trial: Negri and his associates could be held until 1982 before being tried. All the accused have been transferred to high-security prisons under military jurisdiction.

Last month the dissenters in the PCI finally rallied together and published an appeal calling for a speedy trial so that the proofs, if any, may be made public. Party reaction was immediate: in a thunderous editorial in the PCI paper, *L'Unità*, the dissidents were accused of 'ambiguity', of being indifferent to the problem of terrorism and, unlikely as it may seem, of betraying the party line and the 'historical compromise'. The dissidents have one argument, however, which the party may well take seriously. By lumping together such grave charges as the murder of Moro with other far less serious offences, the judges run a risk. Should Negri and the others be acquitted of murder (the journalist accused of having telephoned Mrs Moro has already been released), a mere sentence for 'inciting to commit crimes' would pass unnoticed and the leaders of Workers' Autonomy would walk out of the courtroom exonerated in the public eye. The communists, on the other hand, would have branded themselves as reactionary repressives. This view is echoed from the high-security island prisons: 'It'll be worth it in the end,' say the accused.

The editorialist of *L'Unità*, however, was right to suspect the dissidents of putting the party line into question. 'The truth is,' says Mario Tronti, one of the signatories of the appeal, 'that there is widespread dissatisfaction in the party following the debate on the last elections.' 'It's too early to tell where it will lead,' he says. 'Something, however, has coagulated round this appeal.' The something could be the first serious challenge to the notion of the 'historic compromise'.

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London Diary

☐ 'These stories that are being put out about atrocities committed by the Pol Pot regime are KGB propaganda.' If you want to hear more of the same, wander over to the offices of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU), 152 Camden High Street, at 2pm this Sunday. There you will find various Sinologists – including Felix Greene, fresh from his interview with Chairman Hua – who will be convincing one another that Pol Pot was really rather a kindly old gent, dearly loved by his subjects, and that stories of genocide are poppycock. Although the meeting is, officially, nothing to do with SACU, it is being organised by Mr C. R. Hensman (an officer of SACU and author of the KGB quote), and most of the interest comes from SACU members.

I asked Mr Hensman how, in the light of evidence from Pilger and others, he could bear with a Pol Pot fan club. 'None of these stories about the Pol Pot regime seems to me to be convincing,' he told me. 'I don't concede the Pol Pot government was oppressive. I think it made political mistakes – it could possibly have taken a softer policy with the middle class. But I haven't seen any material which convinces me it was oppressive.' Didn't Pol Pot kill rather a lot of people? 'People have died in large numbers since 1975 because of disease – malnutrition and so on.' Yes but what about other deaths? 'I accept there may have been revenge killings. There's no question that people were executed both offically and unofficially – maybe thousands , maybe even tens of thousands. But we're now hearing about millions of people being killed. This is rubbish. I know it was not the nature of the regime to kill its own people.' Just like Dudley Collard, who, in *The Trial of Radek and Others*, denounced all suggestions of Stalinist repression on the grounds that they would imply that Stalin was 'the kind of man who would have people "bumped off"' – which was, of course, impossible.

☐ Not even Beaverbrook ever took over the books page of the *Express* so that he could write a long and embargo-breaking review of a book about himself. But with *Now!* magazine only six issues old Jimmy Goldsmith has already achieved this: last week he spread himself over two pages of his paper with what was ostensibly a review (a week early) of Richard Ingrams's *Goldenballs*. Goldsmith's piece seemed to have little application to the book, however, and appeared to be simply another shot in his campaign to convince the nation that there is a left-wing conspiracy in the British press, directed against institutions in general and him in particular. Thus he devoted much of his piece to quotes from Arnold Wesker's book about the *Sunday Times*, using it to 'prove' that the staff of the *ST*'s Business News section are infiltrators and subversives. It's clear from all this that Goldsmith has tired of Ingrams and is now turning his conspiracy-sensor elsewhere. I trust that *ST* staff will be careful what they throw in their dustbins from now on – you never know what's going to be used in evidence against you. They might also ponder the awesome lengths to which Goldsmith will go if he really takes a dislike to someone. Michael Gillard, for example, is an honest and valuable journalist who contributes to *Private Eye*; Goldsmith first labelled him, absurdly, a blackmailer. He has now taken his fantasies a stage further: in his review he says that 'in explaining how Tiny Rowland (of Lonrho) subsidised *Private Eye*, Mr Ingrams forgets to mention that Mr Gillard had been on Lonrho's payroll.' Ingrams didn't mention this for the simple reason that it's not true.

☐ It was a delight to see that Mother Theresa has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, particularly in a week when the arrival in London of Henry Kissinger reminded one that the awarding committee haven't always been so discriminating. As Kissinger eased himself into Thomson House for lunch last Friday, one *Sunday Times* hand could be heard commenting: 'Wonderful. The expert on genocide talking to the experts on suicide.'

☐ Whenever I see Lord Carrington my mind springs to Arthur Hugh Clough's marvellous song 'How Pleasant It Is To Have Money' (which occurs in the equally splendid, and undervalued poem *Dipsychus*). One stanza begins:

> O dear! What a pity they ever should lose it!
> For they are the gentry that know how to use it;

and this somehow seems especially true of Carrington, explaining his sanguine approach to the Rhodesia talks: one can't somehow imagine that he has ever worried about anything in his life. Government for him is an amusing pastime, no more, as I discovered when I shared a railway carriage with him on the way back from Blackpool two weeks ago. His private secretary mentioned some diplomatic function which Carrington ought to attend, but his lordship's reply was: 'What date is that? Oh, we've already got the opera that night. Look, send Ridley along to the reception (Nicholas Ridley is Carrington's minister of state), I think *Rosenkavalier* will be much more enjoyable.'

I also couldn't help noticing the regal way in which Carrington thanked the British Rail waiter for our excellent dinner, and graciously acknowledged the man's tugged forelock. What a contrast to the behaviour of George Brown in similar circumstances a few years ago, when a friend of mine shared a dining car with *him*. At the end of his meal Brown rose to his feet, summoned the waiter and instructed everyone in the carriage to join in a rendition of 'For He's A Jolly Good Fellow'.

☐ Julia Langdon wrote a speculative little piece in the *Guardian* a couple of weeks ago, saying that Shirley Williams might take over Bob Mellish's parliamentary seat at Bermondsey, with Mellish being shunted off to run some unnamed quango. Mellish had a denial printed a few days later, saying that the story was nonsense and if he was in the running for any quangoship no one had told him, from which some readers may have assumed (given the lack of any other follow-up) that the *Guardian*'s story was a figment of someone's imagination. This is not, however, so. Bob Mellish is surely not so out of touch that he hasn't heard of the strong possibility that he'll be put in charge of Michael Heseltine's new Docklands Development Corporation and become London's answer to Jock Campbell. It may strike you as odd that a Tory government should appoint an old Labour man to such a position, but it would actually be a masterstroke: Heseltine's main difficulty will be winning the support of the London boroughs for his Corporation, and who better to talk them into it than a veteran of the London Labour scene who'd like a little nest egg for his old age.

☐ *Gay News's* rather alarming headline GAY SEX SPLITS BISHOPS shouldn't mislead anyone into thinking that there is anything revolutionary in the Church of England working party report on homosexuality, You might have thought from all the fuss that it was a wildly pro-gay tract. In fact, most of the document is highly critical of homosexuality, and the only justification given for looking into the matter at all is an extrordinary one:

> Traditionally the Church has ruled out homosexual practices entirely and we are not persuaded that this was a judgment that can now be seen to be totally erroneous or of merely temporary validity, for it does follow in principle from an understanding of sexuality which we believe to be fundamentally sound and defensible. But there is one important respect in which the situation has changed. It was assumed until quite recently that every mature individual was capable of the heterosexual response. It is now clear that for a significant proportion of the population this is not the case.

This is baffling. One always knew that the C of E lived a fairly sheltered existence, but have they really only just been alerted to this fact? Despite all the hoo-ha surrounding it, the report seems to have been a complete waste of time. All hopes now turn to Bob Runcie, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, by all accounts a decent fellow, who has knowingly ordained gay priests and who has publicly advocated the disestablishment of the C of E, mainly on the grounds that it's a lame duck at the moment and that to return it to private enterprise might get it walking again.

Francis Wheen

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ To the British public a man who avoided the hard way to the Pole – that is, foot-slogging – was not a hero but a cheat. Sir Clements Markham denounced Amundsen as an 'interloper' and 'that gadfly'. – *Observer* (J. E. C. Thornton).

☐ We have to provide our own Socialist activities. Last year Greenwich Women's Voice group had a Stuff the Jubilee party. This year we had a May Day party. Both these activities were for children. The political side consisted of throwing things at a mammoth Margaret Thatcher and eating cakes with red icing. Most Socialist men find such events absurd and ignore them. – Letter in *The Leveller* (S. Stuart).

☐ Public reaction to the largest mammal on earth was mixed. 'I thought it would be alive,' said a women visitor, with obvious disappointment. 'If I'd known it was dead, I'd have gone direct to Farnham to see my sister. We made a special detour.' – *Observer* (Ian S. Martin).

☐ But with all these, a north London agent says the applicant who annoys him most is the man who rushes into his office and says: 'What have you up to £150,000? Hurry up, I'm double parked.' – *Observer* (A. B. Knight)

☐ More than five million homes without telephones are to get letters from the Post Office explaining why they have not been sent phone bills. – *Daily Telegraph* (J. T. Hart).

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Cambodia: a derisory drop

From John Pilger

Peter Newman (Letters 19 October) says that if the International Committee of the Red Cross broke the 'rules' and went ahead and sent relief to the majority of the Cambodian people, it would 'probably prejudice any chance of the ICRC operating effectively in the future . . .' The extension of such curious logic can only be this: the Red Cross sticks to its bogus neutrality, resulting in the needless death of countless people and is free to operate with such 'effectiveness' in the future!

If the ICRC was really sticking to its rules, and not bending to Western policies that support Pol Pot, it would apply the *same* conditions to the Khmer Rouge that it imposes on the Phnom Penh government, which controls 90 per cent of the country. But no; without guarantees of 'monitoring' or diplomatic status etc., the Red Cross drops relief over the Thai border which, as Western journalists have reported, does *not* reach starving civilians but fortifies the scrag ends of Pol Pot's genocidal troops. As a result, as Brian Eads wrote in the *Observer*, these killers are now 'well muscled'.

On page 611 of the NS of 19 October, there is an advertisement placed by the British Red Cross, showing a starving child and appealing for funds. The advertisement says, 'A report on the Red Cross relief operation in Cambodia will be sent on request'. I have a copy of this report and the Red Cross press officer has updated it for me. It says that great things are planned and 'hoped'; but, as of 17 October, the total amount of relief sent to Phnom Penh by the Red Cross *and* UNICEF is 300 tons. That is the total relief since 17 July when the Cambodian Government requested 100,000 tons of food. It is a derisory drop. I do not normally promote charities, but NS readers may wish to note that only one British organisation, Oxfam, which has not bent under political pressure, is successfully getting into Cambodia all the relief it can muster.

Daily Mirror, London EC1

NHS defended

From Dr R. J. Jarrett

Ruth Levitt's article (NS 19 October) is hardly a revelation. Most of the disparate items she puts together have been common currency in the *British Medical Journal* – and elsewhere – for years. So the NHS is a national sickness service and we should be all out for preventive medicine! When, therefore, is the Labour Party going to put into its manifesto a promise to a) put a swingeing increase in tax on tobacco and alcohol, b) make seat belts compulsory and c) raise the age of driving to 25 years? All that and diet too is a political/economic problem and not immediately the responsibility of NHS workers, except in so far as they can persuade politicians to act.

Her remarks about the effects of the NHS upon 'ill health and death rates' are misleading. It is true that modern health care (not just the NHS) has had marginal effects upon mortality rates since the major infections were controlled. However, statistics on ill health are crude, as the Resources Allocation Working Party recognised, and have little meaning. Working days lost due to sickness, for instance, can increase or decrease with changing attitudes, methods of certification etc., irrespective of any change in efficiency of health care. Nevertheless, I could fill several pages of the NS with recent therapeutic advances which effectively relieve suffering or enhance well-being. To take two examples: replacement of an arthritic hip has relieved much pain and mobilised many housebound or chairbound people; the development of a method of measuring the hormone prolactin led to the discovery that excess of the hormone was a common cause of infertility – which can now be treated. Both of these examples have led to increased costs, but the beneficial effects do not appear in the kind of statistics read by lecturers in social policy.

Finally, while I freely admit that more money will not solve *all* the NHS's problems, a little extra will solve some of them and taking it away – as Mrs Thatcher's boys are doing – will solve none of them.

45 Bishopsthorpe Road, London SE26

Choose your stick

From Roy D. Roebuck

There are many sticks to beat lawyers, but Bruce Page has seized the wrong ends of those he chose to use in London Diary (12 October), possibly (as he artlessly confesses) because his learning comes from a book of familiar quotations.

Kipling was not referring to an advocate per se when he wrote 'The truthful, well weighed answer/ That tells the blacker lie.' His poem, *Gehazi*, was a protest against the English legal system being allegedly polluted by the appointment of Sir Rufus Isaacs as Lord Chief Justice in the light of his involvement in the so-called Marconi Scandal, his race, and his alleged lack of frankness in a speech in the Commons on 11 October 1912 (subsequently amplified by his testimony as a plaintiff in a related libel action and as a prosecution witness in a criminal libel trial). The reference to lawyers in St Luke (actually xi, 52) is probably a mistranslation for Pharisees (see St Matthew, xxiii 13, 23). With regard to Dickens, Mr Page might ponder on Chapter 56 of the *Old Curiosity Shop* ('If there were no bad people there would be no good lawyers'). As for Shakespeare, Mr Page might, with a little perseverance, have come across Portia.

The gentle dew prevents my writing more – save to invite attention, with regard to Mr Page's jibe that the lawyers have collared all the nicest bits of London, to the NEW STATESMAN's splendid property 'twix (as the estate agents say) Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn.

36 Gray's Inn Square, London WC1

Bruce Page writes: Roy is a lawyer, of course, and there's an old saying that a lawyer who defends himself has a fool for a client. If he looked a bit further, he'd see that neither my Kipling nor my Dickens come from the *ODO*: I merely mentioned it to show that its learned indexers, like myself, had been unable to find anything good said about lawyers. Kipling, of course, often wrote about specific people: he had the gift, while doing so, of hitting off general attributes.

I quite see that 'lawyers' might be a mistranslation for 'Pharisees': as Dickens saw, the lawyers in modern society perform the pharisaical task of dressing turpitude in an outward show of morality. Bunyan describes it still better, in Christian's near-fatal encounter with Mr Worldly-Wiseman, who advises him that he doesn't need to go on carting around his burden of personal responsibility:

> Why, in yonder village (the village is named Morality) there dwells a gentleman, whose name is Legality, a very judicious man (and a man of a very good name) that hath skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are . . . if he should not be at home himself, he hath a pretty young man to his son, whose name is Civility, that can do it (to speak on) as well as the old man himself.

Finally, the lawyers will get no help from Portia. If Roy will re-read *The Merchant of Venice* he'll find that Portia was what today we would call a Mackenzie, and not a professional lawyer at all.

Terry Duffy's pub brawl

From Patrick Wintour

Mr Murray, the AUEW delegate to the Labour Party conference, seemed a little confused in his letter last week. It's simply not true to say that I spoke to him too late to affect my piece, as he knows. I did not claim anywhere in the piece that I had exclusive knowledge either of a 'secret meeting' in Newcastle with union president Terry Duffy or of the way he voted on the issue of the election of the Labour Party leader at the engineers' delegate meeting. It would have been a silly claim since Mr Murray's behaviour was a major talking point at conference. I mentioned the meeting with Mr Duffy (for which it is true Mr Murray is the original source) because it seemed possibly as relevant as Mr Murray's own explanations for the way he had voted. Mr Murray has had ambitions to be elected to the engineers' executive and Mr Duffy's organisation might yet have been able to help him. I apologise to Mr Murray if my piece reads as though there was a formal or informal deal struck between Mr Murray and Mr Duffy. I am sure there was no such deal. I merely thought Duffy's offers of help could have either consciously or unconciously influenced Mr Murray.

Superbread?

From Mrs Alison Claybourne

Marion Woolfson's recipe for 'delicious nutritious' bread (Letters 19 October) interests me. She is not content with 100 per cent stoneground wholemeal flour, but wishes us to add to it, in equal amounts, bran and wheatgerm. If I were as wholehearted a champion as she of things unrefined, perhaps I would feel I ought to boycott any expensive commercial separation of wheat, not encourage it.

Would Ms Woolfson like to say in what ways these additives make her bread more nutritious or delicious than mine, which is just made with wholemeal flour?

6 Laurel Crescent, Keighley, W. Yorks.

From Eric Towers, Ranks Hovis McDougall

Hannah Wright's shock-horror exposure of the bread industry was the usual farrago of untruth and hypocrisy, well-laced with anti-business fervour. The self-congratulatory letters it drew from your readers are almost worthy of a prize in your 'This England' feature.

The choice for the consumer is not, as Miss Wright pretends, between plant-baked white bread and 'hand-made' small baker's wholemeal bread. We ourselves are producers of wholemeal, granary and wheat-germ breads on a scale which no small baker could contemplate. Perhaps Mr Mackie should actually try Mothers Pride Stoneground Wholemeal bread before condemning the brand.

Miss Wright's direst accusation appears to be that white bread may cause constipation, a condition which she assures us is virtually unknown among Assamese rice-farmers. Be that as it may, if she had pursued the question further, she might well have reached the same conclusion as many doctors – that a main cause of constipation in our society is lack of physical exercise.

The characterisation of milling-baking companies as vastly rich concerns, chasing profit regardless of consequence, does not fit the facts. Our last published financial accounts reveal that, before tax, this company made a profit of rather less than four pence from every £1 worth of goods sold. For the sake of Miss Wright's job-security, we hope that the NEW STATESMAN is doing better than that out of its sales.

Naturally, Miss Wright assumes that the Monopolies Commission fell down on the job because she dislikes its findings. The Commission spent four years investigating the milling and baking industries and published its detailed evidence – figures, analyses and conclusions – for all to see. Miss Wright's plan is apparently to tell the Commission to do the job again, having first instructed it to find us guilty of whatever it is we are doing that she personally disapproves of. This is an unusual concept of justice.

Finally, Miss Wright's harrowing picture of our plants as hell-holes, in which a transitory, underpaid, moronic workforce presses buttons on dangerous machines, is an interesting figment of her own imagination. In last month's issue of our employee newspaper, for example, eight awards for 25 years' service were reported and 14 retirements, the average length of service being well over a quarter of a century. Most monthly issues carry longer lists than that.

RHM Centre, PO Box 561, 152 Grosvenor Road, London SW1

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Full steam ahead

All admirers of Bulldog Drummond (and I do so like to picture him and poor old Phyllis, her perilous days of being gassed down the speaking-tubes of taxis long since over, in cosy geriatric retirement in the pseudo half-timberdom of somewhere like Sunningdale, yarning with pals over the wallop with Hugh now a bit wheezy perhaps and the jolly old muscles not quite what they were) will recall that, although no linguist, and there is very little evidence to show that either of the Drummonds ever read, or indeed even owned, a book of any kind, he was able on one thrilling occasion to summon up three words of Italian. Up in London and away from 'Myrtlebank' as I write, my literary base where the well-thumbed Sapper volumes are so constantly and eagerly referred to, I must speak from memory. It was in *The Black Gang*, I fancy, with Phyllis kidnapped and trussed up as usual and chained to a bed in devilish Carl Peterson's country hide-away, Maybrick Hall (the spirited girl had skilfully managed, even while being hijacked near the Ritz, to retain her parasol, important for the plot). Hugh, who has come through an electrified fence and is now creeping panther-like across a dark Maybrick landing on the way to rescue her, bumps into a rascally Italian guard and before, as is Hugh's brisk way, knocking him out, he utters, perhaps to make the victim feel more at home, the only words from sunny Italy that he knows: *E pericoloso sporgersi*. It was *pericoloso* indeed for the guard. To guide her husband to her, Phyllis then manages, in some double-jointed way that Houdini himself would have envied, to rap on her bedroom door with the parasol – such an infinitely more ladylike protective appliance than an umbrella, with its Gamp associations. How clever Sapper was. Does she, when she sees Hugh, breathe 'My man!'? I expect so. She often did.

Now that so few English people travel anywhere in Europe by train, the Italian words will be a novelty to many, for they do not for some reason put them on aeroplane windows, but older tourists will remember them well. Their counterpart in frog was *Ne pas se pencher au dehors* and both phrases were to be seen on compartment doors and they warned that it was wiser not to lean out of the windows, not so much for fear of getting smuts in the eyes but of having your nut bashed in as you passed some signal or water-tank or bridge or other solid and unresisting feature of the line. But because of the travel sickness that plagued me all through my childhood and youth, I was forced to ignore such warnings, either when abroad or at home, and became a deft hand at rattling down the window and depositing my breakfast or lunch outside. The upheavals almost always seemed to occur, particularly when going to London on the Great Western line of hallowed memory, when we were passing through a station (of which there were then many more), its up platform filled with commuters awaiting the slow train. I remember especially a row of startled and revolted and bowler-hatted faces at Slough as we glided past and I laid a rather liquid tribute at their feet.

But despite this minor gastric disability, I keenly enjoyed, and still do, rail travel. In memory's treasure-chest there sits an unusual outing as a boy from Oundle when, and I think it must have been in 1926, the entire school entrained and set off north west for the environs of Giggleswick in Yorkshire in order to observe the total eclipse of the sun, a treat denied to those living south or north of a certain cross-section of England. Our special train consisted of twelve restaurant carriages, one for each school house and the last one for the headmaster and assorted members of the staff. Seated at tables for four, we set off at dusk and before long a cold collation was served, what the frogs call with a sneer *assiette anglaise* and which consists of cold slices of beef and lamb and ham which have got left over from somewhere and which nobody can think what on earth to do with. There was then a substance called Mock Trifle (mock meaning no sherry) and, after a rather dashing boy called Duckworth had called for coffee and brandy and had been refused, we composed ourselves for slumber, not easily come by when seated at a table. One simply laid one's head down among the crumbs.

Whatever route can we have taken through the night? We certainly went first to Peterborough, but then where? Up to Leeds, I assume, and then somehow along the Ribble valley. At all events, dawn found us, chilly and unwashed, detraining in a slightly rusty siding from where we were shepherded down a path and into a soggy field, clutching sections of smoked glass through which to gaze at this wonder of the heavens without being blinded. The chief science master informed us, through a megaphone, of the passing of time and the approach of the eclipse and urged us to note, among other things, the behaviour of the animal kingdom. The day was, alas, heavily overcast but it certainly grew steadily darker and the birds were clearly extremely puzzled. Near us, and less puzzled, was a largish cow who just stood languidly there, brooding quietly to herself. Although the diminishing sun was totally obscured by thick clouds, I do remember a rather strange eerie feel in the air, reported on to one's parents in the following Sunday letter ('There was this sort of eerie feel in the air'). Gradually it grew lighter again, the megaphone informed us that the excitement was now over, three cheers were given for the organisers of the outing (two rather jolly masters who blushed becomingly) and before long we were rumbling home and tucking into bacon and eggs, nourishment which I successfully deposited through the window and onto the platform at, I think it must have been, Doncaster. Still, all in all it had been a novel and pleasing trip and one had managed to miss both a Latin lesson and a Latin prep. What a remarkably enterprising and go-ahead school Oundle was and is. Stuffier establishments in the country had totally ignored the eclipse, had stayed right there where they were and had missed all the fun, cloudy though some of it had been.

I now greatly regret, when it is too late, never having travelled on the Orient Express, a splendid book by that name, written by E. H. Cockridge and published by Allen Lane at £5.95, now revealing all that one has missed. It seems to have been about 1860 that the idea of really *de luxe* rail travel took root and a lot of people got busy. Pullman (he came from Gregory Gulch, Colorado) panelled his coaches in walnut, supplied brass fittings and laid down deep-pile carpets, and President Ulysses S. Grant travelled on them and in them. In Europe the Wagons-Lits started up, the idea of actual sleep while awheel firing the imagination of another American, Colonel Mann, who delighted the public with his Boudoir Sleeping Car Company. And back in Europe again there was the Orient Express, its inaugural trip in 1883 being reported to goggling British readers by the obese and whiskery Paris correspondent of *The Times*, a flamboyant figure called Opper de Blowitz, with Opper marvelling at the silver cutlery, the waiters in powdered wigs and breeches, the ten course dinner, the speaking-tubes for summoning servants (*'Encore du champagne!'*), the marble fixtures, the club-like smoking-room, the *salon pour les dames* (ladies were advised to equip themselves with hatpins in case a gentleman should forget himself in a tunnel). As the train went further east, Opper was to be seen in a sort of Tyrolean rig – very wide knickerbockers, crumpled hiking jacket and a saucy and beplumed hat and was instantly taken for a Calabrian bandit (*'Non, non, moi je suis Opper de Blowitz'*).

Down the years the excitements have been terrific – derailments, ambush by brigands, hostages taken and ransoms demanded (the average German industrialist worked out at about £900 a head), the famous snow drifts which immobilised the train for a week, the glittering years when you could hardly move for Hapsburgs, spies and mistresses, and the merry moment in 1920 when the sixty-four year old French President tumbled out by mistake in his pyjamas (no bones broken but one slipper missing). You'll want to know what happened to Opper. He was finally awarded the Order of Medjidieh (Third Class) by Abdul the Damned. There now!

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Flora Thompson's admirers often ask what else she wrote besides *Lark Rise to Candleford.* This book will satisfy their curiosity. It includes *Heatherley,* an account of her life in Grayshott, Hampshire, in the years before her marriage, and a missing chapter in her experiences of the Boer War years; and other writings, papers, and poems. Illustrated £6.95

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MID-AUTUMN BOOKS

Brian Harrison

History Without Politics?

History Workshop Journal: A Journal of Socialist Historians, No.1 (Spring 1976) – No.7 (Spring 1979) *History Workshop, PO Box 69, Oxford 0X2 7XA* £5 annual subscription (two issues)

If Sir Keith Joseph seeks an embodiment of the British 'anti-enterprise culture' he dislikes, he will certainly find it here. Not a glimmer of enthusiasm for his prized entrepreneurship, not a trace of interest in business history. The emphasis is entirely upon the sufferings industrialisation brought to the workers as producers rather than on the benefits it brought them as consumers; and those sufferings are described with all too little comparative reference to the conditions prevailing in earlier centuries or in other industrialised countries. One of the editors even regards it as in some way 'frightening' that an American bibliography on industrial relations could be more accurately labelled '500 different ways to avoid strikes and increase productivity'. All this calls to mind the pained predictions voiced in the NEW STATESMAN before Earl Mountbatten's funeral – that we were 'in for one of those appalling festivals of fake national unity'; the emperor's means of eliminating conflict are so obscure and so indefinitely postponed in their impact that in effect he has no clothes.

Those who doubt the stability of the British political system and the acceptability of 'capitalism' to the mass of British people will by now be shaking in their shoes; indeed, *History Workshop Journal* was numbered among the allegedly subversive periodicals in the Gould report on higher education in 1977. Yet witch-hunts of this kind are no way to stabilise British institutions: they also risk depriving us of an intellectual treat, and of much valuable information about British labour history. For Marxism in Britain is now a rich and highly diverse brew, and its historians have much of importance to say, whether one shares their premises or not.

The *Journal*'s editors emphasise their socialist commitment, so it is only fair for their reviewer to mention his own commitment to a mixed economy, and to say that, if he usually votes the same way as they do, it is for very different reasons. Yet political divergence is no barrier to recognising good history. The *Journal*'s sub-title is entirely misleading in suggesting that there is a distinct genre entitled 'socialist history'; there is only history, good or bad. The standards of accuracy, imaginativeness, expression and reasoning in historical writing fortunately apply right across the political spectrum.

Though its mood is in one sense anti-enterprise, the *Journal* is in another sense enterprising to a degree, together with the History Workshop movement which created it. Historians who can induce hundreds of people to give up their weekends and carry their sleeping bags half-way across the country to hear history lectures have something to teach the academic community, and perhaps also their political opponents. Their journal brings a breath of fresh air into the rather staid company of the historical journals.

To begin with, it *looks* attractive, with its colourful cover, its numerous illustrations and its imaginative design. It is intellectually enterprising, too. The established historical journal might almost have stepped out of the world of 19th century political economy, so unobtrusively does the hidden hand of its anonymous editor assign pain and pleasure to his atomised contributors (aspirant or successful) as they jostle before him to display their polished wares; the competition arouses intense interest, if only because careers hang upon it (many a chair has been won or lost on the basis of a single review), but it is conducted in almost total silence; the contributors rarely communicate publicly with one another, and their communications with the editor are confidential. In *History Workshop Journal*, all is different: instead of 'reviews' we have 'enthusiasms', in which people praise books (not necessarily recent) which they want others to read. And instead of the anonymous editor, we have the 'editorial collective' which somehow manages to agree on well-written editorials on important questions and conducts a dialogue with its active and often irreverent readers.

Although the *Journal* publishes polished products in every number, and insists on proper documentation, it uses the term 'workshop' advisedly: it wants to encourage its readers to write their own history, and to bridge the gap between the professional and the layman. Its contributors bubble with suggestions of archives and sources which readers should consult, books they should study, problems they should tackle, techniques they should employ. Above all, they share with the editors an invigorating conviction that history is important, and that it defers unduly to adjacent academic specialisms.

The editors insist (*pace* Gould) on the compatibility between political activism and good learning: indeed in several respects the *historical* virtues of their *Journal* spring directly from its contributors' political commitment. Only a sustained dedication to the labour movement could generate the scholarship, insight and rich documentation shown by Stephen Yeo when analysing the subtle relationship between religion and late-Victorian socialism. This is the best article in the seven volumes – though, rather oddly, one of the few to be vigorously criticised in the correspondence columns.

Likewise, only dedication to the Labour movement could have produced Raphael Samuel's integration of rich empirical research with thoughtful analysis in Volume 3. In 55 pages and 301 footnotes, he impressively demonstrates the persisting importance of hand-work at the height of mechanisation: in the circumstances, one readily forgives his candid 'reference temporarily mislaid' at footnote 238. This is only one among several articles which show a welcome shift in emphasis from political protest and industrial conflict towards the routines of day-to-day work.

Yuri Pimenov, Building Heavy Industry (detail), 1927

Involvement in the labour movement also fosters the imagination which asks important new questions and focuses on neglected areas. Frank McKenna's fascinating study of the Victorian railway worker – prizing his uniform, his punctuality, his status and his hierarchy – gains throughout from McKenna's experience of *being* a railway worker. He is often unfair to the railway companies, whose procedures reflect their concern for the customer's safety, but would not the impeccably middle-class research-student have been unfair in other ways? Would he ever have alighted upon the topic at all?

There is probably also an easy transfer from political iconoclasm to the *Journal*'s zest for new sources and methods: interviews, folksongs, ephemera, photographs, paintings – all

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these and more are grist to its mill. Eric Hobsbawm's ingenious attempt to locate in its social context the image of women presented in socialist iconography probably owes as much to his political activism as does the 'editorial collective's' distaste for any crude historical application of American bourgeois sociological models. Even the *Journal*'s stylistic vigour – not a negligible quality in historical writing – owes something to its commitment.

Nor is the *Journal*'s atmosphere of collaborative research unrelated to a belief in the daily practice of socialism reminiscent of Stephen Yeo's late-Victorian socialist branches. Welcome indeed is Jill Norris's frankness about her research procedures when studying Lancashire feminists; Tim Mason even appends his own critique to the article he publishes. Thereby the writing of history comes to seem a less daunting business. Yet this informality lies side-by-side with articles whose quality would certainly gain them admission to the established historical journals. To place them there would arguably make a bigger impact on the historical profession. But to separate them from contributions like Arthur Exell's vividly colloquial recollections of motor manufacture in inter-war Oxford (whose spontaneous and unrepresentative quality would certainly exclude them from an academic journal) would defeat the *Journal*'s entire popularising purpose.

Inevitably the *Journal* has the defects of its virtues: its quality is uneven, and despite the 'editorial collective's' frequent protestations to the contrary, it shies away in more than one respect from directly confronting the historical or any other establishment. A really vigorous challenge will not seek to confine its readership (through its sub-title) to socialists. The reader of *History Workshop Journal* finds himself entering a rather private world, most of whose 'enthusiasms' are unfortunately prized more for their congenial political outlook than for their technical merit, and many of whose articles value the esoteric socialist groups they discuss more for their purity of belief than for their overall significance.

There is a partial inversion here of 'professional' history's values, so that some of the latter's major stars cease altogether to shine, whereas worship extends to some unexpected *gurus*. Two admiring feminists encounter Sheila Rowbotham in Volume 7 and say they 'were really pleased to discover she was very approachable and not in the least intimidating, despite having written lots of good things'.

Inverted values also feature in the pedigrees of the contributors, who often take themselves very seriously, though none can rival Tony Judt's privilege of having been born in a Salvation Army hostel at Bethnal Green. Recherché controversies abound – between Althusserians and 'socialist-humanists', for instance, whose protagonists have a great deal in common, not least their esoteric vocabulary – 'underclass', 'problematic', 'hegemonic' and the rest. One has some sympathy with the engineer who writes in from Brighton in Volume 7 to complain of material, in a journal which was presumably designed for him, which is 'a nightmare of long words and jargon . . . a penance to read'. I thought this rather harsh on the editorial in question, but I wonder how many working men there are among the 2,000 subscribers and 500 shop-purchasers *History Workshop Journal* had won by spring 1979?

The censorship which all this involves is covert and is perhaps only half recognised by the contributors; but the *Journal*'s silences preclude engagement with the enemy. The strong pressures to conformity which I remember experiencing at the last History Workshop I attended (in 1971) are much in evidence here. One feels the need to get out into the fresh air for a breather or it becomes impossible to apply Darwin's golden rule: 'to put every fact which is opposed to one's preconceived opinion in the strongest light'.

In this atmosphere, it is hardly likely that some of the contributors' more questionable notions will be challenged. Nobody has so far contested Alun Howkins's apparent belief, for example, that local disputes on the left, secessions of the timid to the right and a rash of industrial disputes somehow spelt death to Liberalism in the Edwardian period yet not to Labour governments which have regularly experienced all three since then. And if the Labour Party emerged to embody the 'more rigorous' definition of class founded in inevitable economic conflict, rather than to register divergence of status, whatever has happened to it since? 'Empiricist' is a boo-word both for Howkins and for Michael Newman, who devotes a surprising amount of space to criticising the absurdities of British communist strategies on fascism in Britain in the 1930s, while adopting a decidedly patronising tone towards Labour's highly effective non-militant alternative.

The *Journal*'s pressure towards conformity (or at least, towards disagreement within only very narrow limits) damages even the best articles: there is a certain incompatibility between editorial rigour and joint participation in a crusade. Tim Mason's valuable 'Women in Nazi Germany' would have made twice the impact if halved in length, not to mention Anna Davin's somewhat invertebrate piece on 'Imperialism and Motherhood'. The problem is partly related to the *Journal*'s *penchant* for printing and quoting documents; at times this enthusiasm seems almost to require the historian to bow out altogether as an intrusion on documents well able to 'speak for themselves'.

The *Journal* shuns challenge in one further respect, as is implicitly recognised in Tony Judt's invigorating exposé of all that is wrong in (mainly American) social history in Volume 7: the *Journal*'s implicit belief (to judge from its contents), together with G.M. Trevelyan, that social history is 'history with the politics left out'. Social history, says Judt, 'deprived of its claims upon the major events and changes in history . . . is increasingly confined by its leading practitioners to descriptions of the non-political, the avowedly insignificant'. Nowhere in these seven volumes is any interest shown in the exercise of political or even economic power except at the rather trivial level of strategies for capturing it (to do what?). It is an omission which risks leaving Labour dangerously naked in the conference chamber.

The *Journal* introduces a false polarity between the historians of political and organised groupings (political parties, trade unions, reforming movements) and 'democratic' or 'people's' (usually oral) history. In reality, both types of historian aim at capturing the totality of human experience; they diverge only on method. The political/organisational historian studies the relatively well-documented exchanges between the articulate partly because they offer a superb opportunity for gaining an understanding of human nature, and partly because – as Tony Judt rightly points out – their history *is* everybody's history, in so far as their decisions affect everyone. Furthermore, the political/organisational historian rightly complains that the 'democratic' historians have not yet convincingly grappled with the problem of representativeness in their source-material, nor shown how their approach – in so far as it is in any way distinctive – leads to very much more than an undifferentiated sequence of individual biographies. The long-term aims of segmental approaches to history – 'labour', 'socialist', 'business' or 'women's' – will not in fact be achieved until they have collapsed into 'total' history, and so have thereby ceased to exist.

But to return to the *Journal*'s political purpose: all seven of its volumes were written at a time when Mrs Thatcher's electoral victory of 1979 could hardly have been predicted. Yet it was a time when (in contrast to the History Workshop) Sir Keith Joseph was busily engaged in converting his opponents, including some university audiences who (to their shame) did their utmost to prevent him from being heard. He put over his message with courage, passion, energy and lucidity, and he has now achieved remarkable success in his aim of arresting the leftward drift of British political debate; even the names of Hayek and Adam Smith have been revivified. The British labour movement will no doubt feel the need in coming months to learn from his methods – for in politics, at least, there is much to be gained from preaching to the unconverted (19,711,266 of them on 3 May); indeed, in a two-party system, political survival virtually dictates it.

Among this week's contributors:

BRIAN HARRISON is a Fellow and Tutor in Modern History and Politics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He is also the author of *Drink and the Victorians* (1971) and *Separate Spheres: The Opposition to Women's Suffrage in Britain* (1978).

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JONATHAN HODGKIN is a geneticist working in Cambridge at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology.

PENELOPE MORTIMER's most recent book is *About Time: An Aspect of Autobiography* (Allen Lane).

PETER LEVI is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford. His books include *The Light Garden of the Angel King* (1972) about his travels in Afghanistan.

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MORRIS FRASER is the author of *Children in Conflict* and *The Death of Narcissus.*

MEL CALMAN is a freelance cartoonist who draws for the *Sunday Times*. His book, *Dr Calman's Dictionary of Psychoanalysis,* has just been published by W. H. Allen.

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Blake Morrison

Jim, Raymond, Jim

Politics and Letters by RAYMOND WILLIAMS
New Left Books £12.75

Some of the sharpest words written by Raymond Williams come at the end of his little book on Orwell, where he describes the way in which British intellectuals of the 1950s, having given up any commitment to radical social change, almost invariably cited Orwell's disillusion with the Left in self-defence. Orwell encouraged an entire post-war generation to believe that growing older 'inevitably' means moving to the Right – a superstition which the defection of figures like Kingsley Amis and Paul Johnson has strengthened. Naturally enough Raymond Williams has been at some pains to disparage this ideology, since his own development has been the exact opposite of Orwell's – away from quietism towards revolutionary socialism. And like Orwell in the 1950s, Williams in the 1970s has been declared a pivotal figure by younger intellectuals, one whose personal development epitomises a wider and more public 'structure of feeling'. Williams is the Left's revenge on Orwell, its proof that withdrawal and disillusion can be transcended. As Orwell dropped the name Eric Blair and became George, the writer, so Williams on arriving at Cambridge dropped his childhood nickname, Jim, and became Raymond: the Welsh proletarian radical mellowed into a Left-Leavisite. But in the 1960s and 1970s Williams once again found 'Jim', and in doing so helped to re-vitalise Marxist aesthetics in this country.

Orwell's right-wing apologists never interrogated him on such early political 'naiveties' as fighting in the Spanish Civil War. Raymond Williams has not escaped so lightly; in *Politics and Letters* he is interviewed by three editors of *New Left Review*, Perry Anderson, Anthony Barnett and Francis Mulhern, who want him to account for himself – that is, to explain how, for example, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* could have come from the same hand that wrote *Marxism and Literature*. The charges against his younger self are grave indeed: Leavisianism, empiricism, devaluation of theory, failure to acknowledge the primacy of economic determination – Williams looks certain to hang. But the interrogators, aware that Williams repents his former deviance and now sees things much as they do, are merciful. Their wish is not to convict the defendant but to give him every chance to explain away his mistakes and omissions. And Williams is only too eager to seize this opportunity to set the record straight, either by total recantation, or, very occasionally, by counter-attack, or, more subtly, by showing how apparent heresies in his early work actually contain submerged socialist theory. The interviews are conducted in a spirit of geniality and co-operation, with concessions on both sides. They're unusual, though, in giving ample opportunity for the interviewers to state their own position – an explicit departure from what is seen as the 'bourgeois' interviewing mode. The questions are often as long as the answers, and there is no pretence of impartiality.

Though the book gives the fullest picture to date of Williams's intellectual development, the spectacle it offers is not an especially admirable one. Williams is only rarely incited to that aggression and outspokenness which characterise his best critical passages. More often in these interviews he is humbly self-castigating, acknowledging the justice of the *NLR*'s charges – 'Yes', 'That's right', 'I agree', 'I concede this' – and then compounding the cravenness by re-writing his intellectual history in order to make it acceptable to the New Left. Time and again what are obviously non- or anti-Marxist writings are presented as having hidden strategies, latent intentions, submerged histories, or particular contexts, and are thus rendered more orthodox than they appear. How, the committee wants to know, could Williams have treated so sympathetically in *Culture and Society* that 'unbridled racist and imperialist' Carlyle? Well, partly because Williams had already written an essay on Carlyle as fascist when an undergraduate; in *Culture and Society* he had withdrawn from this instinctive position even though, of course, it meant writing against the grain. Why was he not more specific in *Marxism and Literature,* rather than letting the targets of his attacks go unnamed? – 'I was cramped for space'.

Some readers will find explanations like this far from convincing, and it's noticeable, too, that when the heat is really on, Williams has some curiously convenient lapses of memory, as if his former self were totally separate and disembodied – the 'Raymond' that 'Jim' can neither comprehend nor control. Why did he leave the Communist Party in 1941? 'There is something I don't fully understand here myself.' Why did the term 'race' not appear in *Keywords*? 'I did a lot of reading on the term, and I don't know why in the end it was omitted.' One of Williams's strengths is his capacity for honest doubt; but this sometimes shades into evasiveness and convolution. Whenever his language becomes abstract and over-qualifying, it's a fair bet that Williams is skimming over an awkward issue or (like Leavis) deflecting the force of the opposition's attack. At one point here he responds to a *NLR* criticism by saying 'I don't find myself disagreeing with this. Including the possibility, even the probability, of understanding what I was saying as contradicting it.' Now try following *that*.

When Williams is re-writing his past, and his interlocutors interested only in gradations of his literary and political opinions, then *Politics and Letters* is of limited interest, a mere show-trial. Fortunately there are two other functions which this book performs, both of which redeem it. One is its role as biography: the first and last sections of the book trace Williams's life from boyhood through to the present. Growing up in border country gave him an unusually mixed but unifying childhood – both rural and urban, Church and Chapel, English and Welsh, mental and manual. Though comparatively unadventurous in his reading, Williams was writing by the age of 16, producing plays in a village hall, and sending off a novel to Gollancz. His family was politically active, and he campaigned for the Labour Party. He arrived at Cambridge in 1939, 'unprepared', but politically mature and 'extraordinarily unafraid', quickly finding friends in the Socialist club, and then joining the CP (he had still little sense at this time of any division between the Labour and Communist parties). He seems to have been very active in this first Cambridge period, editing two student papers, writing short stories and becoming Chairman of the Union. But his English studies under Tillyard went badly, and his second year ended in 'Extraordinary personal and emotional disorder'.

What followed seems to have been a long period of isolation and withdrawal. His tank-commander war experiences were 'appalling'; his return to a subdued and apolitical post-war Cambridge gave rise to feelings of frustration and failure; Ibsen's tragedies obsessed him; *Politics and Letters*, the magazine he helped found, was not the committed organ it should have been; he became 'much more qualifying and anxious and careful, always stressing complexities and difficulties'. Though he wrote steadily, for a decade after 1945 Williams lost the confidence he'd felt before the war. It took events in the late 1950s and 1960s to re-engage him, to begin the process of awakening 'Jim'. He joined the CND movement and (later) the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign; wrote the *May Day Manifesto*; supported student and worker revolt; and has now reached the point where he believes gradualist reform to be futile, and revolution the only right choice. In providing this clear history, as well as a number of fascinating anecdotes about Williams's fiction (Day Lewis editing out the radical politics in *Second Generation*, an undergraduate story called 'Mother Chapel' causing scandal back home), *Politics and Letters* performs an undoubted service.

The other redeeming feature of the book comes, perhaps surprisingly, from the quality of the interviewing. True, the NLR trio can be faulted for allowing so much of the dialogue to fall into a pattern of accusation-and-denial, and for making some of their rejoinders so chillingly Dalek-like – 'That is a helpful clarification', etc. But their knowledge of Williams's work is impressive, and they take him up on a number of key problems: his attitude to Freud and psychoanalysis; his commitment to realist modes; his idealising of the potential of television and cinema; his view of Trotsky and the Russian Revolution. Most pertinent of all is their scrutiny of Williams's recent assault on the notions of 'literature' and 'criticism': does this not, they ask, lead to a total relativism, in which it is no longer possible to pass critical judgment? (Williams answers them well on this particular point.) There are, of course, issues on which any non-Marxist would want to press harder – Williams's seemingly Lukácsian view of Modernism, for example (at one point he speaks of its 'corrupting influences'), needs further examination. But within its Marxist confines *Politics and Letters* does a conscientious job. It may not persuade us to accept Williams's version of his intellectual development ('Raymond' is not so easily eradicated as he pretends), but it convinces us of his range and importance.

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Adrianne Blue

Prime Time

The White Album by JOAN DIDION *Weidenfeld* £5.95

The Making of a Muckraker by JESSICA MITFORD *Michael Joseph* £6.95

So now we've gone beyond the tabula rasa to *The White Album*. Didion takes her title from the Beatles's stark, floodlit, final 'White Album' vintage 1968, which she says epitomises the desolate wail of California (read America) from then till about now, the epoch she chronicles here. Even more than the essays in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, these read like an eyewitness account, testimony rather than analysis, a verification of ugly rumour. In the psychologically-dishevelled landscape of the title essay, dark denouements occur without provocation. Mothers leave their five-year-olds in the middle of the motorway to die. Another Kennedy is killed. Joan Didion selects the dress that Linda Kasabian will wear when she testifies against Charles Manson, the chief murderer of Sharon Tate Polanski, Jay Sebring, and friends. Life's script has stopped making sense – morally, psychologically. Wild nightmarish forces have made reason go craven. Or, as Didion puts it, the narrative has broken down.

The Golden Land is in decline, but Ms Joan Didion is in her prime. In the American status stakes, she is the second most distinguished practitioner of the New Journalism, a tight-lipped rival to exuberant Tom Wolfe, both of them mining the rich vein of right-of-centre reportage. Didion visits Black Panther Huey Newton in jail. At first she judges him 'an extremely likable young man, engaging, direct' – not the sort to *contrive* to be a 'political martyr'. But when the tape recorder is switched on, he starts making 'pronouncements' – about Radicalism, Capitalism, Racism, and she doesn't like him so much any more. She doubts that he has the political sophistication to see that 'he was more useful to the revolution behind bars than on the street', to see that he has become 'an issue', fodder for, omigosh, the Black Revolution. An American analogue to Steve Biko. But Linda Kasabian is not an issue; she remains a person, a white person. She is released from prison, and some time later she and her children accompany Didion and her daughter on a trip to the Statue of Liberty.

Like Leni Riefenstahl, Didion could make Hitler seem fatherly. She is a stunning writer, dangerous; and this is a mesmerising book, a bleak gloss on Henry Miller's *Air-Conditioned Nightmare*. There was a time, the waning of the Sixties, when Didion travelled with a typewriter and bourbon and bedroom slippers – but no watch. She didn't know the time of day. 'This may be a parable either of my life as a reporter during this period or of the period itself.' Read on, and her migraines, her walking nervous breakdown, a scarey tentative diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, are emblems of America's crack-up – the anthropomorphic fallacy; the landscape reflects my light. Read further and she shifts the ground again: 'I am not society in microcosm.' The world is a belligerent bronco, un-understandable, except occasionally when it suits her prejudices. The feminist movement is dismissed for being petit bourgeois intellectual rather than haut bourgeois intellectual. An attack on Doris Lessing, an easy mark, is cruel, also unintentionally ironic. Lessing's dilemma according to Didion: 'What we are witnessing here is a writer undergoing a profound and continuing cultural trauma, a woman of determinedly utopian and distinctly teleological bent assaulted at every turn by fresh evidence that the world is not exactly improving as promised.' Precisely Didion's 'problem' as catalogued in *The White Album*. Lessing's horrific flaw, Didion says, is that she refuses to accept that the narrative line was long ago ripped to shreds; she keeps searching for 'the final cause, the unambiguous answer', preferably a political one. Ergo, Lessing's sin is that she is not Joan Didion. The same biases appear in *A Book of Common Prayer*, Didion's most recent novel, another exquisitely-wrought, reactionary book. It is perhaps a matter of temperament. Didion just does not like the hunched, often unbecoming postures of partisanship.

Less than 400 miles up the Pacific coast, Jessica Mitford occupies very, very different ground. *The Making of a Muckraker*, a collection of essays covering roughly the same period as Didion's, is standard utilitarian Mitford – a book in the mainstream of investigative journalism – although Mitford has always had an eccentric bent. She goes after unscrupulous morticians rather than used-car dealers; mail-order sales in defective and over-priced courses in creative writing, rather than ill-made overalls or sitting-room suites. Originally, most of the pieces were written to effect social change; and most of them did. Now Mitford tacks an afterword on to each, bringing the story up to date, telling how the essay was rejected by vested interests, before Truth won out; or how the title was smartened up by the editor; or how the law was changed to protect (and once to coerce) the innocent. There is also a didactic introduction in which she gives rules. There is something ever so slightly old-fashioned about the plucky tone of Mitford's essays, something comforting. There is also something worrying about the fact that she seems not to have noticed at all Didion's world of anomie.

There are two extraordinary essays in the book. 'A Talk with George Jackson' is a largely question-and-answer encounter with the black activist author of *Soledad Brother*. Mitford regards him as a person, a political person. So there is contact, if not quite an I-and-Thou relationship, between the well-born English woman and the American ghetto kid who has spent 14 of his 29 years in prison.

> When three months later Jackson was gunned down in the San Quentin shoot-out, his words, to which I had listened over and over in the course of my laborious transcription of the interview, came back to me in his distinctive tone of voice: 'And it's pretty clear that what they're saying is that, "First chance I get, nigger, I'm going to kill you." '

'You-All and Non-You-All' is a hopeful sequel to Mitford's Fifties tour of the South on behalf of Willie McGee, who was executed anyway, a black victim of legalised white hysteria. Now in a black church in Montgomery, Alabama, Mitford hears Martin Luther King preach civil rights. Outside, a mob destroys her car. Mitford rings up to find out if the insurance will cover. It does.

Final Journey
The fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe
Martin Gilbert
The stories told in these pages are based on eye-witness accounts, and on contemporary evidence. Wherever possible, I have given the precise date of every document quoted, and have cited the actual words, both at the time, both by the Nazis and by their victims.
I have tried to tell the stories of individuals, as well as of communities. On their own, the statistics are powerful and terrible. But the story of the Nazi attempt to murder the Jews of Europe concerned individual people; people with names, families, careers and futures, for millions of whom no one survived to mourn, or to remember.
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Morris Fraser

The Dictatorship of the Hormones

The Psychology of Sex by H. J. EYSENCK and GLENN WILSON *Dent* £5.95

The Puritans made sex naughty; Freud and the psychologists made it boring. This little book fairly heaves with self-congratulation on its privileged access to modern psychology and its 'scientific' approach to sex and its problems. Heaven help science.

'We are faced with a great sea of ignorance surrounding us', intone the authors, 'and unfortunately advocates on both sides refuse to carry out the necessary research.' But, in spite of this rare three-dimensional difficulty, look further. Soon, as on the dust of some deserted battlefield, there are discernible the lines of an ancient proposition, a caveman's Mandala, a flourish of radiating lines, crosses, wheels and Magic Numbers. North by East, and halfway up the libido scale from 'obscene pics' to 'masturbated by partner', behold an elongated balloon enclosing the sexual fantasies of most of mankind. Below left, encased in a flattened oval or bean, are the rest of you – the whippers, the fetishists, the anons and the 'outdoors'.

And so it continues – the drearily familiar graphs, tables, questionnaires, neuroticism and extraversion scores, all human sexuality stretched between what the distinguished psychologist John Money has called science's 'antiquated dichotomies' – nature versus nurture, inherited versus acquired. Eysenck, as always, pushes the determinist line, hopelessly muddling the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' and being at pains to pronounce that we are male and female, homo and hetero, principally at the dictates of our hormones – though it is conceded that environmental factors are 'important'. Yet the authors cannot escape from this flat-earth model that ploddingly sets ordinate against abscissa with absolutely no acknowledgment of the present-day conception that all behaviour patterns are multi-determined, the sum of a wide range of influences or 'push factors' that both institute them and keep them alive.

No – the authors are diverted from any such recognition by their apparent need to continue fighting Eysenck's ever-more-tedious battle against the psychoanalysts, with the usual sneers at Freud, his followers and their 'speculative theories'. Little attention will be given to this kind of theory, we are promised, but the authors' long account of the development of sex roles later is, they admit, 'inevitably speculative'. All in all, evaluations like, 'If you believe that, you'll believe anything' represent the general level of critical comment.

Evidence brought in to support the authors' determinist stance is highly selective and just as misleading. For example, the contention that male hormone levels and pelvic shapes

The Sleep of the Great Hypnotist

The Life and Death and Life after Death of a Modern Magician

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correlate with homosexuality and feminine behaviour in the male rests entirely on a German text that is both untranslated and out-dated; the assay methods in use then are now known to have been altogether unreliable and have been superseded by methods that show no difference in these indices between homosexuals and the majority of males. There is, again, no discussion of the crucial role of parental deprivation and modelling in shaping sexual preferences, apart from the quite extraordinary advice that 'since it is virtually impossible to ensure that a boy will never encounter deviant stimuli it might be wise to saturate the environment with "normal" heterosexual sources of arousal'.

The final chapter, dealing with the new sex therapies, is again marred by the authors' irritating compulsion to go on yapping at the heels of the psychoanalysts, but in between there is some coherent information on techniques used by some psychologists in the treatment of sexual difficulties. The defence of aversion therapy in the treatment of the various sexual 'perversions' is however misconceived in that the objection is not just to the treatment's moral offensiveness but to its ineffectiveness and its antiquity. Even within the behaviourist school this kind of 'target therapy' is considered outmoded for all but a few conditions, and has been replaced by a more broadly-based therapy depending on behavioural formulation, modelling, and social skills training. There is no reference to these.

Certainly it can do no harm to reiterate the fact that, given such a wide range of preferences, there can be no inflexible rules about sexual behaviour. But only marginally less objectionable than the campaigner who wants to make it all illegal is the bore who wants to make it all research-based, empirical, culturally cross-validated and remorselessly, incongruously 'scientific'.

John Lucas

I'm Sorry

In A Strange Land by STANLEY MIDDLETON
Hutchinson £5.95

At the end of *Two Brothers*, Stanley Middleton's last novel, Kathleen Weldon, betrayed wife, stands in the dark of her house, looking over Nottingham, and thinks of the people she knows and loves, all of them busy with their own affairs. 'She pressed her cheek to the cold pane. She stood alone, stood for the solitary'. It's a modest, defiant stoicism that Middleton catches there. It doesn't amount to a full look at the worst, but it has its own integrity. 'Men were about, if only just.' It's a distinctively modern awareness, one most usually associated with Frost, who captures it wrily, uneasily, comically, in poem after poem.

In A Strange Land is frosty and Frostian. Its central character, James Murren, is a man who stands very much alone. But in his case it isn't so much a matter of self-knowledge or pained acceptance as of indifference. Murren is a brilliant musician, who finds himself with a teaching job in a Midland city. He's soon in demand with local musical societies and equally with local women. Murren may sound reminiscent of the hero of that early, very fine Middleton novel, *Harris's Requiem*. But there's a crucial difference. Harris felt himself to belong to his community, to the locality. Murren doesn't give a damn for either. He's in a strange land, waiting for the call from London. (By the end of the novel it's come.) If he stands for the solitary it's because he prefers it that way. When he gives piano lessons to a bored, unhappy housewife, and she throws herself at him sexually, he takes what she offers, but without concern or curiosity. 'As a human being Prudence was unseen.'

Murren is a cold man. Middleton is good on that, good also on his relationship with the selfish Jessica, one that founders just because they're so incurious about each other, apart from when they are in bed. There's a really marvellous moment when Murren plays his own setting of Housman's 'From Far, from Eve and Morning'.

> The piano trailed upward into the bleak spaces of unbeing, undoing the warmth of the voice, the generous offer, sketching the transitions of life, the old and blank skies, the bravery of one small human talking to, touching another, among the icy, eternal unconscious enmity of the vast universe. Locked in a chain of canons, the art of strict counterpoint sketched the gaping, cold cave of uncare round Housman's insect voice.

For the most part Murren lives contentedly enough inside that cold cave. The woman who sings his Housman setting, Janet Bruce, is in love with him. She wants him to make love to her, and he, heavy with drink, can't. ' "I'm sorry," he said, uncaring.'

The problem Middleton faces here is to convince us that anyone would care for or about this iced-over, ruthlessly selfish man. And I don't think he entirely solves it. So that when the local, friendly vicar confesses that he looks on James as a son, and adds, 'What I don't want you to do is to spend so much time on your music that the rest of your life seems, er, a, parenthesis, er, a footnote,' the embarrassment isn't his alone.

Murren is the more or less passive observer, who watches 'the hail of occurrence clobber life out/To a shape no one sees.' Others are clobbered, especially Walter Payne. Jessica's father, a retired bank-manager, husband to a vitreous-hard headmistress wife who undergoes a frightening crack-up, Payne is one of Middleton's finest inventions. Prim, ordinary, not very good with words (Murren begins by despising him), Payne nevertheless finds himself committed to the sufferings of others, trying, helplessly, to assuage Jessica's grief over her dead fiancée, to bolster his wife's suddenly shattered confidence, to help a family of Poles, who themselves are in a strange land, the father dying of cancer, the mother scarcely able to speak English, the daughter mis-married to a Scottish miner. Middleton doesn't soften any of this. There's an appalling and appalled bleak truthfulness about the way he shows us the indignities that all these people go through. The Wisniewskis, for example, are wiped away. There is no meaning to their suffering; it simply happens to happen. And if Patricia Payne's collapse is partly caused by her guilt feelings about the suicide of an alcoholic brother there's no consolation to be derived from it. Nor for Jessica, broken by a sudden, violent death. 'You can't love people to order,' she says at one point; but the worst knowledge is that you can't not love to order. Knowledge is, in fact, suffering, and Payne is 'crucified with knowledge'. None of his efforts amounts to much. (When he tries to touch Murren, the musician, typically, cringes back into his chair.) But the sheer, obdurate determination of the man to go on caring is extraordinarily well done. His is the bravery of one small human talking to, touching or trying to touch another. It's familiar Middleton territory, of course; but it's rarely been better explored.

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Penelope Mortimer

Hold-All

Cannibals and Missionaries by MARY MCCARTHY *Weidenfeld* £5.95

There must be good reasons for long novels; you can't, I suppose, polish off the Napoleonic wars in a sentence or pack Forsyth into a paragraph. But there are some very bad ones: size and weight, like inedible exhibition onions, win prizes, and although this is not in itself a crime it has little to do with the cultivation of literature.

The story in Mary McCarthy's latest, 369-page novel is slight, though hard to fillet. Two groups are going to Iran: one – a liberal gaggle of two American clerics, a Kennedy-school Senator, the President of a women's college, a Dutch deputy, a young woman journalist, a member of the CIA, and a Scottish professor – to investigate and expose conditions in the Shah's SAVAK prisons. (This is in some unspecified, pre-Ayatollah time, and McCarthy seems unaware of any fundamentalist Muslim fervour in her Iranian revolutionaries, who are dusky caricatures, vaguely described as 'Arabs', with PLO sympathies.) The other group is composed of multi-millionaire art collectors on a luxury package tour. Their route is from Kennedy to Paris, then via Tel Aviv to Tehran. My MEA map doesn't acknowledge the existence of Israel, let alone Tel Aviv, and I would have thought this itinerary unlikely; but presumably McCarthy knows better.

Anyway: on page 85 and the flight from Paris to Tel Aviv, the plane is hijacked; 32 pages later, the hijackers shoot the CIA man's cat. They fly to Holland and transfer to a helicopter, which takes them to a polder. A polder is a piece of Dutch land reclaimed from the sea, This, in fact, is the new polder, Flevoland, where the specifications of the central planning authority on holdings limits land-ownership to 30 hectares or 75 acres. This information, together with the origin of the name 'Flevoland' and a great many statistics about light industry, the production of sugar beet and cereal, timber (4,000 hectares) and agriculture (46,000 hectares), is imparted by the Dutch deputy to an apparently fascinated audience of hijack victims standing in the pitch dark and freezing cold on the runway. They stand there for 19 pages, after which they push the helicopter into a barn. The logistics of pushing a helicopter into a barn are minutely described. So are the history, lay-out, plumbing and central heating system of the farmhouse to which the hostages are then taken, though none of this has any particular relevance and gives no impression whatever of a farmhouse in the middle of a polder – difficult though that impression may be to give.

The hijackers demand a ransom of 1¼ million dollars, immediate withdrawal of Holland from NATO, breaking of relations with Israel, and liberation of all 'class-war prisoners' from Dutch jails. They also arrange (in some way) to have the millionaires' Vermeer, Titian, Dufys, El Grecos, Cézannes and even Laurencins flown to the polder. This, unlike

the dissertations on art values and the value of art that goes with them, takes no time at all. The American bishop has a stroke. The woman journalist falls in love with the Dutch deputy – presumably an interesting experience, disposed of in one sentence. The leader of the terrorists, Jeroen, falls in love with the Vermeer. The CIA agent gives himself a fever by strapping a bar of Ivory soap (from the Statler Hotel) in his armpit, which inspires one of McCarthy's most vivid similes: 'his forehead [was] the colour of a young Leidsekaas with cumin', which for all I know may be exactly the colour of a CIA agent's forehead when he has a temperature of 39.5 degrees (or 103.1 degrees Fahrenheit, the journalist rapidly calculates. 'Henk was pleased to think of a computer with flashing lights swiftly adding, subtracting, multiplying, inside that noble head.') Finally, when it becomes clear that Holland has no intention of abandoning NATO, and the pointlessness of the whole enterprise overwhelms him, Jeroen blows himself up, Vermeer, Cézannes and all. Like a Viking, one of the 'Arabs' says. ' "Like a muezzin," he repeated', presumably delirious. Like the angel with a flaming sword at Eden's gate, says the surviving cleric, homeward bound on KLM. Like Lot's wife, says the President of the women's college. Like Samson, says the Reverend.

> 'Pulling down the temple', she agreed. 'On himself and all the Philistines. But Jeroen didn't *intend* to kill anybody but himself. I think we have to accept that. Himself and the pictures. It was more like a suttee in a way.'

One might assume, from this final conversation, that the Reverend and the President have become unhinged by their experience. But they were talking like this 340 pages ago. There has been no shock, no relation. They settle down to watch a David Niven movie, and on this last – and first – note of reality, the novel ends.

These are the bones, such as they are, of the story: pretty flimsy. But add lengthy dossiers on each character and at least 50,000 words of dissertation, exposition and didactic homily, and you have a pretty corpulent book. With remarkable naiveté, or honesty, McCarthy prefaces it with a list of acknowledgments to no less than 27 individuals or institutions without whose help, apparently, it could not have been written: the Dutch 'for repeated trips to the polder, for an inexhaustible fund of information on proper names and place names, political parties, religion, national cus-

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BODLEY HEAD

toms . . . for making possible visits' [or visits possible?] 'to two farmers' dwellings'; to the *Washington Post* for sparing an entire morning to instruct her – rather sketchily, perhaps – about internal politics in Iran; to her husband for, among other things, a marked plan of the interior of a Boeing 747 indicating the Smoking and No Smoking sections.

> And I think warmly of Hannah Arendt, who heard a lecture I gave at the University of Aberdeen on 'Art Values and the Value of Art' and said afterwards, 'You should draw on that for a novel.'

Eager, misguided Hannah Arendt. It's not enough to be bright as a button and smart as a whip – without imagination, and at least some fastidiousness of style, a writer should keep to distinguished journalism and the lecture platform. Imagination comes low on the list of McCarthy's talents. The style she uses for her 'creative' writing is hilariously horrible. Her characters muse, with elfin grins; they think to themselves, and know whereof they speak; their eyebrows shoot up, 'making points of interrogation'; they venture, retort, assure, interpose, cry, declare, bark, innocently wonder, roar, persist, protest, but very seldom actually say anything; they pull themselves up short and smite their brows. But the clatter is that of tin figures blowing in the gale of their author's dialectic. McCarthy says, with very good sense, that this is her last novel. Let's hope that she will continue to bombard us with her energetic ideas, leaving the chores of character and plot to story-tellers. Clumsy and long-winded fiction is unworthy of her ebullent wit.

John Coleman

Star Wars

Stars by RICHARD DYER *BFI* £2.25
The World's Great Movie Stars and Their Films by KEN WLASCHIN *Salamander* £7.95
The Great Movie Stars: The Golden Years by DAVID SHIPMAN *Angus & Robertson* £15

Anyone with half an eye to the market will have noted that film studies are a growth industry. Richard Dyer, himself Lecturer in Film Studies at the University of Warwick and editor of a previous BFI publication, *Gays in Film*, tells us that his new monograph began life as a study guide for the use of teachers. I find this deeply depressing, but then I find much of the activity of the Institute's Educational Advisory Service – under whose auspices *Stars* is issued – equally so. Both versions of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* were about a small town whose inhabitants got taken over by 'duplicates' from outer space. The analogy is irresistible. Most of the contributors to *Screen* magazine and, in varying degrees, such departmental writers as Dyer seem no longer accessibly human but, rather, pod-people, crammed with ill-digested Metz and Marx, emitting a computerised version of prose that bears only a tenuous relation to everyday language. The concerns of these possessed sectarians are theoretic and Procrustean ('it is only on the basis of a proper theorisation of one's object of study that one is able to pose questions of it' – Dyer); the means by which these arid concerns are conveyed and reinforced are a semi-arcane jargon and constant citations from other pod-people's – often unpublished – theses.

What is so lowering is the knowledge that the number of students of film being indoctrinated – or 'invaded' – by emissaries working out of the BFI steadily increases. (A tardy awareness of this at top level may be indicated by a cautionary note prefacing the Dyer: 'The opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the British Film Institute. Neither do they represent official BFI policy.') And *Stars*, alas, can fairly be taken as exemplifying the kind and quality of 'proper theorisation' currently being promoted in places of higher learning. After two careful and mountingly incredulous readings, I surfaced with the conviction that where it is not trite ('Action . . . refers to what a character *does* in the plot', 'Inevitably, the films have a distinct and privileged place in a star's image'), it is crass (Liz Taylor's love-life may be 'paradigmatic of the problems of heterosexual monogamy'), and where it is neither of these it is simply illiterate ('stars are very often on the raw edge of the individual-versus-society, self-versus-role nexus') or obfuscatory.

It is not merely that Dyer's procedures prove to be unpursuable, for all the elaborate, apparently step-by-step breaking down of his material into heads ('Stars as a Social Phenomenon' – sociology; 'Stars as Images' – sociology plus semiotics; 'Stars as Signs' – semiotics), sub-heads, sub-sub-heads and so on; nor even that a large part of his text is devoted to citing and then whittling away at other theorists' propositions: the latter is, after all, par for the course in academic circles. But, beneath the accumulation of jargon – 'to foreground', 'polysemy' – it becomes clearer and clearer that circles are just things Dyer goes round in. As befits a 'serious' study, loftily preoccupied with generalising from particulars, we are above getting names right: Katherine Hepburn *passim*, Ronald Coleman (thanks, but no thanks), Mark Anthony the well-know Yank, *Mildred Peirce*, Jon Voigt; and an index which sets stars' name in italics thus makes stars of Pat Boone, Mae Clark without an 'e', Eddie Fisher, Tippi Hedren and Nancy Sinatra, among others.

But Dyer has lost sight of his avowed subject, i.e. 'stars', long before. Many of his misspelt vapourings are simply about film actors in general (only Wayne, Davis, Dietrich, Brando, Monroe and Fonda, J. get a little special, laboured treatment) and a lot of his space and energies go on a near-hysterical propagandising against sexism. So we have the hideous 's/he', 'lighting cameraperson' (William Daniels), '(sic)' shoved in after every 'he' or 'his' not attached to a given male name, and poor Molly Haskell accused of being 'heterosexist'. There is a certain trapped poignancy though, in the closing sentences, a diffident whiff of humanity in the pod:

> . . . When I see Marilyn Monroe I catch my breath; when I see Montgomery Clift I sigh over how beautiful he is; when I see Barbara Stanwyck, I know that women are strong. I don't want to privilege these responses over analysis, but equally I don't want, in the rush to analysis, to forget what it is I am analysing . . .

'Seriousness is too often the refuge of the shallow, as Wilde noted.' Thus Ken Wlaschin, programme director of the London Film Fes-

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tival and of the NFT for the past decade, modestly disclaiming any such intent for his *The World's Great Movie Stars and Their Films*, a copiously, cunningly and colourfully illustrated volume of 230-odd big pages, containing some 400 succinct, enthusiastic and frequently funny potted biographies accompanied by 10 Best lists of their subjects' work in the cinema (these lists sometimes cheat, confessedly, since too many silent films have gone the way of all nitrate). This well-researched dip-and-dip-again entertainment redresses the balance for that house divided, the BFI, by commonsensically ascribing the effectiveness of stars to three factors: image, personality and persona – and offering brief (to me, satisfying) definitions of these elusive terms. From dozens of highly quotable items, I particularly liked the resurrection of Gilbert M. 'Bronco Billy' Anderson, 'the first genuinely tinselled phoney in Hollywood'. Born Max Aaronson, he 'couldn't even get on a horse, let alone ride one'. He learned, eventually. And who was the 'only Hollywood star not bothered by sound'? Rin Tin Tin, of course.

Best of all and hot from the press is a revised, expanded and updated edition of David Shipman's marvellous one-man *The Great Movie Stars: The Golden Years*, first published in 1970 to rightly unanimous acclaim for its blend of scholarship, judgment, wit and all-round knowhow. A few swift skims and spot-checks reveal quite a few wily adjustments: *The Great Dictator* is subtly down-graded, as is the re-make of *Le Jour se Lève*. For heaven's sake, buy it – even if it means selling the car: nine years ago, it cost just £2.75. Another first for the Tories.

Nicholas Shrimpton

Womb's Eye

Spring Sonata by BERNICE RUBENS *W. H. Allen* £4.95
Winter Doves by DAVID COOK *Alison Press/ Secker* £4.95
Mother's Helper by MAUREEN FREELY *Cape* £5.50
The Old Jest by JENNIFER JOHNSTON *Hamish Hamilton* £4.95
The Redeemer by HUGH FLEETWOOD *Hamish Hamilton* £5.95

It is Christmas Day in the mortuary and on the slab a cadaver awaits the attention of an over-worked pathologist. As he draws back the sheet he is suprised to find the body of a hugely pregnant woman. But that shock is nothing to what awaits him when he opens the distended womb. For there, pressed against the uterus wall and soaked in amniotic fluid, is a notebook filled with childish writing. This macabre circumstance is the opening scene of Bernice Ruben's new novel. The contents of that disconcerting notebook, preserved and interpreted by honest Dr Brown, provide her highly original plot.

What this memorable first chapter does not suggest is the tone of the book. *Spring Sonata* is neither a collection of gloomy gynaecological horrors nor a solemn attempt to create a convincing foetal consciousness. Instead it is an exuberant comedy which uses its womb with a view to get a fresh perspective on that old satirical butt, the Jewish family. Our unborn narrator may be unprecedentedly youthful. Naive, however, he is not. From the very first moment of life he is making cynical judgments on the customs of his kith and kin. Conceived at ten in the morning on the Day of Atonement, Buster's earliest recorded thought is that he will get nothing to eat until sunset.

Famine, of course, soon proves to be the least of his problems. His future relatives are civilised, well-educated, responsible citizens. They are also a set of emotional ruffians who treat family life as a kind of urban bloodsport. When Sheila phones her mother to announce her pregnancy, for example, we expect tears and affection. We actually get a response which has the loving delicacy of a charge of buckshot. 'So now', snaps Mrs Joseph, 'I hope you'll give up smoking.' Buster turns his ear away in despair, wondering what he is doing in this stony-hearted brawl. But our infant war-correspondent cannot leave his post, and he sends back dispatch after dispatch conceived in Bernice Rubens's most savagely entertaining manner.

Though even the more sombre chapters are peppered with racy jokes, there are some serious concerns. Buster is a musician, a potential violinist, and he relishes the womb as the ultimate ivory tower. Should the artist, he wonders, try to preserve such isolation and untroubled integrity? These aesthetic reflections, however, and the brief solemnities of Prologue and Epilogue, are firmly subordinated to the central comic theme. Bernice Rubens takes the modern family apart as

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ruthlessly as anybody in the business. Her distinction is that she makes us laugh while she is doing it.

The opening chapters of David Cook's *Winter Doves* remove us from ante-natal depression to its post-natal equivalent. June, a suicidal patient in the Mother and Baby Unit of an asylum, meets Walter, the eponymous hero of Mr Cook's previous novel. He is a gentle and generous mentally retarded man, now in his mid-forties and used as a trusty by the hospital staff. With his help June is able to escape, and the two of them set off on an odyssey through the down-and-out world of Jubilee Year Britain. *Winter Doves* is in many respects a compassionate and knowledgeable book. It contains some expert observation of mental hospitals, squats, Spikes and night shelters, and an interesting discussion of the effects of the 1959 Mental Health Act. Whether it is much of a novel is, unfortunately, another matter. The slight plot (boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy finds touching posthumous message from girl), and the imaginative attempt to enter the minds of the sub-normal, are only loosely associated with the mass of documentary detail. The 'love story' of the sub-title, consequently, seems almost an afterthought.

The family is once again the topic in Maureen Freely's first novel, and here it is seen in its most strenuously progressive form. Through the eyes of Laura, a student working as a mother's helper, we watch two New England academics and their unlovely brood. Father is a political historian struggling to reconcile his liberal conscience with a job in the Nixon administration. Mother is a trendy sociologist writing a thesis on children's rights. The irony, of course, is that her own children enjoy none. A grotesque apparatus of Family Councils and communal decision-making leaves them unfed, dirty and deranged, the victims of their parents' well-meaning theories.

Like so much social satire, *Mother's Helper* is written from a profoundly conservative point of view. These parents are the radical students of a decade ago. Laura accuses herself of disloyalty when she thinks of them as 'a group of idiots playing a game they didn't understand'. Her creator clearly sees them as just that, regards the mood of 1968 as both self-indulgent and tyrannical, and believes its effect on a new generation to be disastrous. Mothers, the novel suggests, should not put the founding of feminist magazines and the making of television programmes before their domestic duties. Fathers should assert themselves and order radical lesbians and extra-marital lovers from the house.

Though these pugnacious points are made with a good deal of wit, the book does suffer from its length. When a single Aunt Sally is battered as remorselessly as this, the experience eventually becomes a little wearisome. But a writer who lands as many palpable hits as Maureen Freely can feel that she has made an enviable debut. Potential readers who enjoy their meals should perhaps be warned that the central symbol of moral disorder in this book is bad food. From the organic birthday cake which two visiting Belgian girls decline on the grounds that 'We think that possibly it is poison' to the vegetarian stew which looks in the graphic words of a four-year-old, 'like number two', the catalogue of culinary disasters is fit to turn the strongest stomach. I suspect that Ms Freely herself keeps what used to be known as a good table.

No such physical unpleasantness is to be expected from Jennifer Johnston's *The Old Jest*, a dreamy evocation of adolescence in rural Ireland. Nancy Gulliver lives (of course) in a decaying country house, her guardian is a horsey aunt, and when the sea isn't beating coldly on the shore the wind is sighing sadly in the reeds. This is, in fact, 1920 and down the road in Dublin the rebels are sniping at the Black and Tans. It emerges as a season of mists and mellow frightfulness, in which the horrors of war remain picturesque details on the fringes of a process of personal maturation. Nancy carries a secret message for what her smart Anglo-Irish relatives call 'the Shinners' and thereby emancipates herself from a decaying imperial past. I couldn't help feeling that it was all too slight and too easy.

Murder is an equally facile procedure in Hugh Fleetwood's *The Redeemer*, a novel about the most dreaded of all literary diseases, writer's block. His hero, Ben Maciewski, is a successful novelist who finds that the words flow without trouble as long as he kills someone on the day before he begins a book. There follows a series of scenes in which elaborate philosophical reflection is combined with gross physical violence. Why can't people accept compromise, ponders Maciewski, as he obliges a meek French music publisher to accept a kitchen knife through the left eyeball. The story of his attempts to decide whether a fellow writer is saving him or egging him on remains a stiff little melodrama. But it did make me wonder whether the police shouldn't look into some of those 'Be A Successful Writer In Six Easy Lessons' advertisements.

IS BRITAIN DYING?

Perspectives on the Current Crisis

Edited by Isaac Kramnick

In this timely collection of essays, distinguished scholars and politicians (including Edward Heath and Barbara Castle) probe the source and nature of Britain's apparent ills. Are those ills, they ask, symptoms of rapid social decline or are they inevitable spasms brought about by Britain's struggle to achieve new and innovative patterns of life in the post-industrial age? Placing Britain's current methods of handling its social problems in the context of British history and traditions, the contributors set forth their views on Britain's economy, domestic politics, world position, and problematic future.

As Isaac Kramnick points out in his introductory overview of the British crisis, Britain's ability to reconcile bureaucracy and social welfare with an Anglo-Saxon concept of freedom will carry great significance for the United States. Whether this country is dying or not, who stands to learn more from Britain's struggles than the nation that shares so much of its heritage?

Illus. 320 pages £7.95. To be published November 1979.

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Peter Porter

The Future

It is always morning in the big room
but the inhabitants are very old.
Crooking her finger on a watering-can,
a precise figure of regret, no wisp
of her silver hair disturbed, drips succour
on a cat-predated plant. Words here
are shredded like its silver leaves,
they are epitomes of chanciness,
none will get you through the day.
When the sun fills the windows with its
misleading call to truth, the old woman
changes to a young girl, then to a man
from a novel looking up to ask
why things have gone so very wrong.
I am allowed, as if this were a dream,
to join them on their tableau.
We do not die, they say, but harden
into frescoes. This is what the future means,
her seeking me on her knees, poignant
as a phrase from a Victorian novel
or farewell spoken beyond a watercourse,
lyrical erotica I have no talent for –
Just the one room brightening, to which
hasten all the relatives of insecurity,
talking of my brief Bohemian days:
to be poised as the long-necked swan
and collared badgers while the work
of worldliness is done, to stay the same
after the sun has gone, waiting merely
for light to show us up; the future
is to stand still with one gesture held,
a white glove entering a confluence.

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Jonathan Hodgkin

DNA, Lysogeny & RNA Tie Club

The Eighth Day of Creation by HORACE JUDSON
Cape £7.95

Historians of science, already busy dissecting the 20th century into manageable pieces, frequently declare that science has experienced two major revolutions in the past hundred years. The first of these was in physics, during the period 1900-1930. The second revolution, which is the subject of this book, took place in biology and lasted roughly from 1950 to 1970. It led to the growth of a new branch of science, which called itself molecular biology. The revolution in physics involved the overthrow, or severe modification, of a large and well-established body of knowledge. It also involved the introduction of many concepts that are alien to everyday experience. Special relativity, wave-particle duality, the exclusion principle, and so on, all seem distinctly unnatural ideas, to scientists and non-scientists alike. The second revolution had a different character. There was no established framework to overthrow, only a few vague notions with the remnants of vitalism lurking in the corners. The framework that molecular biology supplied was surprisingly simple, general, and easy to grasp. Words like blueprint, messenger, machine-tool, even proof-reader, are freely used as metaphors for the way genes and enzymes function, and there are well-defined molecules that correspond to these words. Thus, physics turned out to be more complex than had been envisaged, while biology (or part of it, at least) turned out to be simpler.

The birth of molecular biology is therefore less interesting, from a philosophical point of view, than the development of modern physics, but it is much more accessible to the general reader. In 1950, no-one expected that the fundamental chemistry of life would be so rapidly and completely worked out, and the 20 years after 1950 were a time of high excitement in biology. Horace Judson has set out to chronicle some of the major discoveries in this period. He is not a scientist, but he has now spent over 10 years talking to scientists, and in the process has accumulated a vast corpus of material relating to molecular biology. A large part of this consists of anecdotes, reminiscences, and gossip related by the major figures in the field, but Judson has also unearthed many documents (mainly letters) that provide contemporary accounts.

Out of this mass he has extracted a fat book that will fascinate anyone with an interest in modern biology, or in how science advances. Judson is not primarily interested in the science itself, but in the scientists, in what it feels like to do experiments, and in what he calls 'the intellectual texture of science in progress'. The result of this approach is an unusual book, in which the exposition of the science is secondary to the exposition of the scientists. One consequence is that the book tends to give the more flamboyant and voluble characters most of the limelight.

The Eighth Day of Creation falls into three parts, of which the first and most successful is yet another account of the events surrounding the proposal of the DNA double helix by Watson and Crick. This version is probably the best so far, and certainly the most balanced. The second part covers the subsequent decade, culminating in the discoveries of messenger RNA, the operon, and the genetic code. The last part takes in a longer span of time, and describes the first solutions of protein structure, and the origin of some of the main ideas on how proteins work.

From a technical point of view, the book is almost faultless, but it may not be too easy for the general reader – for whom Judson claims he is writing – to follow all the detail. A small glossary might have been a good idea, since many non-biologists will probably have a hard time keeping track of terms such as lysis, lysogeny, and lysozyme. Some judicious skipping may also be advisable, particularly of the bits where Judson gives atom-by-atom descriptions of various chemicals. These are minor cavils: on the whole the book is written in a leisurely and readable manner. It's not surprising that several chapters were first published in the *New Yorker*.

Various themes emerge from this piece of scientific history. First of all, references to an exclusive international group come up again and again, especially in the early period. The 'phage church' was followed by the 'magic circle' and the rather comical 'RNA Tie Club', whose members were supposed to address each other by the names of amino acids ('Dear

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Tyr . . . Love, Ala'). Work and ideas produced outside these groups were not given much consideration. Hindsight partly justifies the elitism: much of the important work was indeed done by a small number of scientists, and the same names – notably Linus Pauling, Francis Crick, and Jacques Monod – crop up in many different contexts. Secondly, there was undoubtedly an emphasis on reasoning from minimal data, on style and elegance in thought, just as there was in the development of quantum mechanics, but this time it seems to have been more self-conscious. Also, it didn't always work. Some stylish ideas proved to be true, but one elegant invention, the 'code without commas', turned out to be plain wrong. Nowadays biology has less use for elegance, though that may just reflect the dearth of good ideas.

A fair number of novel remarks about science are churned out by the scientists Judson has talked to. One of the more intriguing is the idea that scientists tend to fall in love with their problems, and become reluctant to see them solved. There is a good example cited in the figure of Erwin Chargaff, who made a vital observation about DNA in 1950, but refused to acknowledge its significance. Subsequently he set himself to play Thersites to the whole proceedings, decrying molecular biology as a symptom of the decline of civilisation. Of modern scientists in general, he has written, 'That in our day such pygmies cast such giant shadows only shows how late in the day it has become.'

Chargaff's major objection is that the field is too simplistic; time may be on his side. Towards the end of the Sixties, many of the central figures described in this book decided that the basic mechanisms of nature had been solved and that it was time to move on from single cells to multicellular organisms, to the problems of neurobiology and development. Advances in molecular biology had been so rapid and so spectacular that it was hoped that the same brash approach would yield similar dividends in more complex systems. The last 10 years or so have shown that this was much too optimistic. There have been advances, but on the whole the rate of progress has slowed to the more sedate pace of the rest of biology. In the period that Judson covers, theory and prediction often far outstripped experiment, and that has ceased to be the case.

It's possible that the days of great insights and grand unifying schemes in biology have ended. Judson makes little reference to recent developments, or the lack of them, and he also has little to say about possible social consequences. This history of the 'Golden Age' of molecular biology is largely uncritical, but it is still a remarkable piece of work.

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November 1979

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Russell Davies

S. J. Perelman 1904-1979

S. J. Perelman, the independent American comic writer, died last week. In one sense only was this a merciful release: namely that S. J. P. is now no longer under the obligation to satisfy, daily, the world's curiosity about performers razzier than himself. It will come as a great relief to him not to have to rehearse again the offscreen habits of the Marx Brothers, none of which – none of whom – was congenial to him. Nor will he fend off any more breathless enquiries about the shape of the Algonquin Round Table, or, worse, kindly-meant compliments on that dreadful embarrassment to him, the screen-play for *Around the World In Eighty Days*. Perelman 'won' one-third of an Oscar for this, and heartily wished he hadn't. The Academy's decision is funnier than the script, not one thirty-third part of which has Perelman's touch.

In his own country, Perelman was latterly in danger of being cast as little more than a talented eye-witness, wittily recalling the supposed greats of Broadway, Hollywood and the *New Yorker*. And this was no doubt one of the reasons why we in Britain saw so much of him during the Seventies. After the death of his wife Laura, there was little enough to keep him in the States. It was quieter and safer here; Perelman enjoyed the courtly survivals in our public life and language; and besides, it was gratifying for him once the Marx Brothers and their ilk had been got out of the way ('I never knew they kept an ilk,' I hear Perelman's voice saying in my mind's ear), to be treated as an original humorist and language-therapist with a still-thriving practice. One was amused, and honoured, in the early Seventies, to see that famous splay-eyed, pork-pie-hatted figure acclimatising itself to new haunts – the New Merlin's Cave pub on a Sunday lunchtime, for example, where Perelman tired of George Melly's Hampstead Harlemism but enjoyed being overrun by Augustus John-style children and nodded at respectfully by their pullovered, skiffle-age parents.

Then again, Perelman's position in American Letters has perhaps always been easier to perceive and acknowledge from this side of the Atlantic. A. P. Herbert, in a late-Fifties edition of *The Best of S. J. Perelman* (my copy, published by the Reprint Society, is marked 'out of print', which suggests the kind of layered, ironic victimisation Sid thrived on), strongly insisted that 'nearly all these pieces . . . are criticism in some sort', and though Herbert goes on to mislabel Perelman's Chandlerian fantasy 'Farewell My Lovely Appetizer' as a 'perfect little story in the Peter Cheyney style', he is fundamentally right. The very violence with which Perelman's prose lurches from the Bowery into the Rare Books Room of the British Museum and back again implies in itself that there is a conscious and moderate way to treat language, and a correspondingly civilised way to treat those who use it. Any humorist who loses this kind of moral equilibrium may be briefly zany, but thereafter he'll be unreadable.

Perelman was never that, but he remains too wordy for some tastes. The *New Yorker* has never been too hard on garrulity, and plenty of its writers have run stringily to seed there: but the real danger in Perelman's case is that the sheer variety of references and momentarily-assumed tones will batter the reader into exhaustion. It is no accident (as they say in the Rare Books Room) that S. J. P. is better-known for his beginnings than his endings – everybody's fresher then, and ready to enjoy the ricochet of association, the bounce of nomenclature:

> 'Professor Gompers is ill?' The whisper spread like wildfire through the packed classrooms. A feeling of emulsion swept over me. Kindly old Professor Gompers, whose grizzled chin and chiseled grin had made his name a byword at Tunafish College for Women!

This is from 'The Love Decoy', an early piece (titles later became more ambitiously curlicued; these days no self-respecting humorist feels at home without a Perelmanised *mot* at the head of his stuff, after the pattern of, say, *The Hand That Cradles the Rock).*

The more you look at Perelman's collected works – and without *The Best Of* or *The Most Of*, it can be tricky, because you'll find that *The Road To Miltown* is the same book as *Bite On The Bullet*, that *A Child's Garden of Curses* is an omnibus containing *Crazy Like A Fox*, etc, etc – the more you realise that there's a complete social commentary on the United States embedded in it: more securely embedded, indeed, than ever it was in works of conscious compilation like Mencken's *Americana*. Because Perelman's prose must surely be the richest treasury of available levels of discourse, what analysts of style like to call 'registers', that has yet been assembled. And his greatest achievement in organising it, I rather think, was in resisting the very natural tendency (still displayed by American Jewish humorists two or three generations away from the immigration) to puncture every single pretension, to reveal a grubby stain under every picture on the wall. Perelman never pretended to be the common man. The central thread of his style was smoothly learned, frankly literary; so it enabled him to

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reach up and clobber pomposity effortlessly, but also to reach down and use for his civilised purposes the countless wild barbarisms of the madly mixed American language. His career, in effect, was one long refusal to let go of the incompatible life below for the sake of the seductive enlightenment above. He remained a gently pained observer – for, as one of his titles states, 'It Takes Two To Tango, But Only One To Squirm'.

Mel Calman

Hogarth in Hampstead

Mrs Weber's Diary by POSY SIMMONDS *Cape* £3.95

Dear Posy,
What shall I do? The NEW STATESMAN rang me just now and asked me to review your new book, *Mrs Weber's Diary*. So I said, 'Yes'. 'Yes, but'. The problem, Posy, is that we're friends. I remember first seeing your work at that Central School of Art Degree Show – all those wicked, witty adverts and postcards . . . And rude jokes about the Queen. And I thought to myself, this girl is very good. This girl is an original. And because that's rare – I wanted to meet you. And then we met . . . and I told you I was interested in your career. And you said, they all say that. Or perhaps you said something better than that, because I remember thinking – she's funny as well as extremely pretty. But you were in love with . . . I forget his name, but he went into Advertising. And I was Brooding over . . . I forget her name, but she went into Speech Therapy and Macramé.

That must have been about ten years ago. And now look what's happened – you've become a National Institution. You've done the thing the English middle-classes love best of all: you've taken the piss out of them. You've X-rayed their Habitats, seen behind their John Lewis roller blinds and revealed their innermost thoughts. You've become the Hogarth of Hampstead. And done it all with such sweet drawing and gentle guile that they still love you. Funny how hard it is to annoy the English. Only Hitler and Gerald Scarfe can do that. And Steadman in his anal phase.

I especially admire the way you have captured the young so well. Their clothes, their attitudes, their way of talking or rather, not talking. You have such a good ear. You listen and smile and I know that the tape recorder is whirring away inside your head. And you score with the drawing. All proper stuff – not just cartoon scribbles like some people we could name. And you have a strong sense of graphic design.

Your pen is as sharp as Osbert Lancaster's. You have his gift for accurate detail. I think I like your work best when you draw a little blood and don't let your good nature allow your victims to escape too lightly. If you are in an English Tradition of Literary Humour, which I think you are – then your ancestors like Gillray should remind you of your duty to

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offend now and then. It's awfully good for the circulation – yours and the newpaper's.

What you have done is to give the cartoon strip some of the texture that novels have – plus more jokes than most novels have. Anyway, enough of this golden guff about your talent. You will get a swollen set-square and that will never do. Tell Tom Maschler he is a lucky man to have you on his publishing list. I don't want to boast but I lent him an iron once. That was in the exciting days when I was a NW1 quiche-eater myself.

And by the way, please can we have more surreal jokes? I did enjoy the strip where the characters in the Toile de Jouy come alive.
Mel.

Peter Levi

Tribesman

Desert, Marsh and Mountain by WILFRED THESIGER *Collins* £9.95

Travel writing is bound to be autobiography of a kind, and in the perspective of a life the most courageous explorations take on an added resonance. Wilfred Thesiger has lived a tough life and a strange one, but he would be happy to live it over again. His contributions to science have been remarkable enough, but the momentum of his career has been the constant grasping of opportunities which no longer exist now, even for him. The first opportunity was genetic. His father was British representative in Addis Ababa, his uncle was Viceroy of India, the founder of the family was a midshipman under Nelson who became Lord Chancellor under Queen Victoria. His own childhood was wild and wonderful, his English prep school unutterably hellish; his father died when he was nine. He had seen more of physical danger and untamed tribes at that age than most travellers ever see. He spent his first Oxford long vacation as a stoker on a ship in the Black Sea, his second with the Duke of Gloucester at the coronation of Haile Selassie, followed by some hazardous explorations of his own, and another as a deckhand on a trawler off Iceland. He was a boxing blue, and a very good shot. At Eton the heroes of whom he dreamed were the leaders of tribal resistance in the wilder parts of the earth.

Even in his generation, a twist of fate might have made him a don, like Maurice Bowra, or a colonial administrator, or a game warden, a scientist of animal behaviour. He did in fact join the Sudan Political Service in 1935, and had four years on the edges of the Libyan desert and the Sahara, and then among the naked Nuer on the upper Nile. But even then he was hungry for the vaster Arabian solitudes. His war service was predictably gallant, but he seems to have found it irritating. He resented being confined and cut off from the desert in a jeep. The moment it was over he got himself commissioned to explore in the wildest recesses of Arabia for the breeding places of desert locusts.

His technique as a traveller has always been a combination of nonchalant bravery, persistent patience and common sense. His axiom was to assume, rightly as it turned out, that however the locals travelled he could do the same. He underpinned his journeys with scholarship and profound knowledge. The result is that in his lifetime he has seen not only what no other Englishman has seen, and lived more closely with his wild friends than they could have done, with mutual respect, affection and I think love, but he has seen what no longer exists. He knew the great cities of the oil coast when they were villages. He knew tribesmen who had about them 'the special polish of the inner desert' when that was still a way of life. No other writer, neither T. E. Lawrence nor any other, has expressed the desert so sharply and so unforgettably. But in the end authority closed in on him. His permissions to travel were blocked by friends and enemies alike. Arabia was closed to him, and he went to settle down among the marsh Arabs of the Tigris.

He had moved from the life of a boyish hunter among wild peoples, through the paternal relationship of the Sudan service, to loneliness and comradeship with his Arab travelling companions in the desert. Now he wanted to live for a time in an Arab community. These pages are moving and harrowing. Life became more complicated in the Tigris marshes as he took more part in it. He gave some medical help, he performed circumcisions for the local youths, his methods being cleaner than the alternative. But political revolution put an end to his year in Iraq. Iran, where he followed a tribal migration, Kurdistan, which he knows well, Afghanistan, where his travels are the most interesting I have read from modern times, and the Yemen, where his photographs are almost more exciting than his adventurous text: all these wonderlands are closed. The story ends 10 years ago. The epilogue he writes now is elegy sharpened by some salt of bitterness.

Why do I like this book so much more than most? Because he writes with lucidity and grace, with the authority of experience, about some of the most interesting people and places in the world.

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Christopher Reid

Bathos

Yes, I had come to the right place:
the jumbo
cheeseplant languishing at a window
told me,
and the lift's bisecting doors confirmed it.

Emboxment and apotheosis followed
at once. I approved the fragrance of a late
cigar, while numbers counted
themselves discreetly.

Time to remember the whole of
my wasted life:
evenings of apathy; vague,
extravagant walks;
the cat bemused by my keyboard
melancholias.

And now this feeling, as if I had
been deftly
gathered into an upward oubliette,
to arrive – where? – at a meadow
of sulphurous carpet.

There was a young girl at her desk
with three
telephones. I spoke to her politely. Magic!
I heard: 'Mr Dixon will be with
you shortly.'

A huge vase full of plastic flowers stood
on a ledge, where an old man,
passing, bent to savour them.
The unregenerate minutes turned
and turned.

Of Mr Dixon's office, I can recall
the photograph of his wife, some
freckled apples
and an alarming stuffed owl under
its bell-jar.

But everything else has vanished.
Stepping out
of the lift, beyond the ailing cheeseplant, I
looked back and wondered if
something important were missing.

Deputy Literary Editor

Paul Binding has been appointed Deputy Literary Editor of the NS. He is the author of *Robert Louis Stevenson* (1974); *Separate Country: a Literary Journey through the American South* (1979); and of a critical edition of Stevenson's *Weir of Hermiston* (1979). He has worked for Oxford University Press, and written widely on contemporary literature. He is currently engaged in a study of Stephen Spender.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

David Caute

Picasso, Bardot, Astérix . . .

The topography of Paris continues to echo its political history. Entering the metro at Jaurès and changing trains at Stalingrad, you may surface at Charles de Gaulle or Franklin D. Roosevelt having traversed the entire spectrum of commitments, excluding only Bakunin and Hitler. The Fifth Republic, now 21 years old, celebrates its hegemony by erecting gigantic public edifices dedicated to the presiding fathers of the Gaullist miracle. Of these, the Centre Georges Pompidou, otherwise known as the Beaubourg, is clearly the most repulsive.

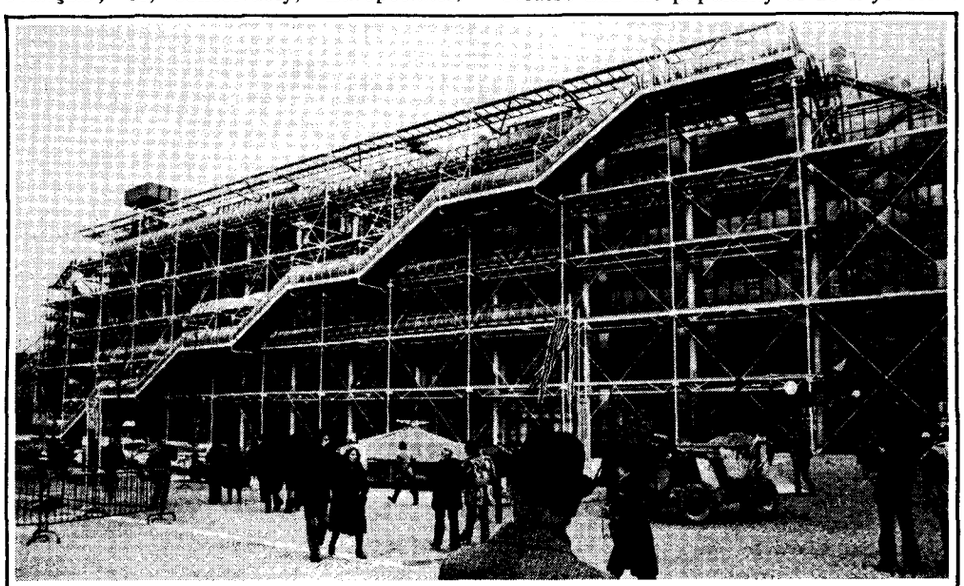
Writing in the *Observer,* Anthony Sampson tells us that the Centre Pompidou 'contradicts the idea of French elitism, or indeed of French nationalism'. And why? Because it magnetises vast crowds of visitors and voyeurs; because it was designed by a British and an Italian architect, then constructed by 'international' engineers and German steelmakers. The result, concludes Mr Sampson, is 'defiantly cosmopolitan'. Oh yes: with a little more discretion, the Pompidou could have been named after Albert Schweitzer, U Thant or Martin Luther King.

What took me there was the splendid Paris-Moscow exhibition reviewed in these pages by John Willett (6 July). Before describing the real nature of the Centre Pompidou, I would emphasise that the exhibition closes on 5 November; those wishing to view this remarkable convergence of art and architecture, hinged to a time of exceptional political and aesthetic ferment, should make haste.

The Georges Pompidou National Centre of Art and Culture, which opened to the public two years ago, resembles, as Mr Willett pointed out, a petrochemical plant. Massive and domineering, its exterior is barnacled by an aggressive network of coloured pipes and transparent tubes. This superficial tribute to Brechtian alienation, whereby the working guts of the building are frankly displayed, might suggest a de-mystification, an assault on the cosmetic tradition of facade, were not the whole enterprise so clearly geared to alienation of a more sinister kind.

The transparent tubes, reminiscent of the futuristic corridors at the new Charles de Gaulle airport, and truculently suspended outside the Pompidou, suck visitors along conveyor belts from one floor to the next, suggesting an inexorable processing of *l'esprit* – one expects to see bemused 'cosmopolitan' tourists tumbling out at the end of the tunnel of culture, like Dr Seuss's Sneetches – with stars stamped on their bellies, blinded eyes and two heads.

The Pompidou will certainly provide the flash point for the next French Revolution. Forget the Bourse, the Sorbonne, the Odéon. Aware that uprisings are no longer the province of *sans culottes* or *ouvriers,* but of enraged students incapable of distinguishing between political and cultural symbols, the Gaullist regime has obligingly provided a massive target which will not only hypnotise the radicals but – at the press of a button – obliterate them. It was in 1972 that the Pompidou Government embarked on the *'renaissance de la rive droite'* and decided to plant the next revolutionary playground in the Zone d'Aménagement Concerté des Halles. The Centre is fronted by a large cobbled courtyard. Here the excited multitudes will gather to hear the future Cohn-Bendits propounding the pure way and to storm the Bastille de la Culture. At a signal napalm will pour down the coloured pipes while the enormous, curved ventilators which face the Centre across the courtyard like sentinels will spew forth Presidential exhortations (*'Françaises, Français'*, or, conceivably, *'Européennes, Européens'*), ball bearings, poison gas manufactured in Nantes, and concrete music.



The Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Meanwhile the Police casually rehearse for the day. Good-natured crowds gather beneath the great pyramid to observe fire-eaters, jugglers, buskers, acrobats, maniacs. At seven in the evening the law moves in exultantly, turning out the lights, distributing fines, swinging truncheons. Everyone is delighted by this hint of *actualité.*

Yet within the building, on the fifth floor, revolutionary art from Soviet Russia has been lovingly collected, lighted and annotated. In the basement the elegant black intelligentsia of Paris assemble to see a company from Senegal performing Aimé Césaire's play, *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe,* a satirical exploration of the Revolution's capacity for instantaneous self-betrayal. In the bookshop works celebrating the revolutionary adventures of art, architecture, music, dance and literature are laid out like coloured candy. This is the first thrust of the grand design: Herbert Marcuse's nightmare.

The preferred weapon of Gaullist *assimilation* is photo-montage with voice-over caressing the ear – script, *après* André Malraux. An exhibition, set up by Jean Delthier and Daniel Crochet to celebrate the new French architecture and town planning, unashamedly locates the renaissance in 1958, the year of De Gaulle's reincarnation. Scale models are supplemented by a photo-montage commentary which (with disarming frankness) manages to subsume protest and subversion into the grand march of a capitalist democracy unlike any other. Thus Ben Bella returning in triumph to Algeria, the postures of the Communist Party, disaster at the Nanterre *'campus universitaire'*, ecological protest, the uprising of 1968, and Sartre threatened with arrest are assimilated into the triumphal progress, material and spiritual, of the Republic. A collage of appetising symbols: Camus, Brigitte Bardot as Marianne, the Concorde, the comic strip Astérix, the Théâtre National Populaire (remember Gérard Philipe?), the French white rat Hector in space, Malraux's Maisons de la Culture, *développement massif du camping et du caravaning,* the French bomb, dresses by Courrèges . . .

Gros need not mean 'gross' but it feels like that when you glibly inject the word into both Picasso and the popularity of do-it-yourself: *'Picasso fait merveille au Grand Palais; gros succès populaire et culturel.'* Then: *'Le bricolage et système D font merveille; gros succès populaire et commerciale.'* In 1973 there were 1.5 million credit cards in use (*merveille*?), in 1976 there was an Art Déco exhibition and the CP abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat. A year after the Centre Georges Pompidou was opened topless (*seins nus*) bathing broke out. Culture as nostalgia, revolt as performance, dissent as art, material progress as culture and we come full circle, our critical faculties incinerated.

Add one discreetly moderated ingredient, the imperial style: busts of the great architects who in recent years have won the *Lauréat du grand prix national d'Architecture,* Jean Willerval, Paul Andreu, Roger Tallibert (who designed the Olympic complex at Montreal), Jean Renaudie. Beneath the busts TV screens set into the pedestals flash news of their work. Yet one bust is shrouded by a plastic bag pinned to which – beguiling confirmation of the democratic instinct, it couldn't happen in Prague – is a letter of protest from the

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architect to the Director of the exhibition: 'Monsieur . . .' Despite the alert that Marcuse cabled to the world, warning of 'repressive tolerance', the Ministry of Culture has smilingly accepted the challenge.

Conveyor belt and transparent tunnel to the fifth floor, expanding view of the Gaullist skyline. Although repressive tolerance is a strategy whose rules the Russians have never understood, the question remains, is there not a noticeable affinity between this petrochemical plant and the palaces of culture erected in Soviet Russia? To answer this one must first distinguish between Stalinist and pre-Stalinist architecture, and, secondly, between buildings actually built and extravagant drawing-board flights of fancy. Many futuristic and constructivist designs, delicate, humane and light-winged, never achieved the third dimension. Either the will, the money or the engineering capability was lacking. Notable examples are Nikolai Ledovsky's cubist fantasy, 'Meeting Temple of Peoples' (1919), Alexander Rodchenko's extravaganza project, 'Palace of Work' (also 1919), and Les Vesnin's vision of a building to house the Leningrad edition of *Pravda* (1924), a glass-walled rectangular tower worthy of a production by Erwin Piscator.

Even before Stalin crushed the avant-garde the public buildings actually erected tended, by contrast, to weigh heavily on the earth like Lenin's Mausoleum. Yet the fierce debates which split pre-Stalinist Soviet architectural opinion suggest that the Centre Georges Pompidou would not have been applauded in the Twenties, except perhaps for its engineering achievements. Despite the Futuristic awe of the Machine which deeply affected post-revolutionary Soviet designers, men like Lissitzsky and Constantin Melnikov sufficiently cherished the romantic element in symbolism to avoid the crushing arrogance of the Pompidou. As in Weimar Germany, energy was generated by the idea of architecture as a synthesis of human needs, as a delineation of space which fostered specific activities without subjugating those activities to the space delineated. That, however, was a tragically short story: the Soviet geniuses of the Twenties all ended up with plastic bags over their heads and no notes of protest attached.

Theatre – 1

Benedict Nightingale

Très Copain

Hamlet by SHAKESPEARE *New Half Moon*
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by TOM STOPPARD *Young Vic*
Middle Age Spread by ROGER HALL *Lyric*
You Never can Tell by SHAW *Lyric, Hammersmith*

'Très grande-dame' was Max Beerbohm's celebrated summing-up of Sarah Bernhardt's Hamlet. 'Très copain' would better describe the Frances de la Tour version, with its greasy, lanky hair, black trousers, and red jerkin decorated with a collage of animal fur, grass, torn plastic and coloured foil. She looks as if she's just slouched off her Suzuki into a transport cafe specialising in the soggy chips that no doubt explain the raddled pallor of her complexion. The 'glass of fashion and the mould of form', quaintly claims Judy Lloyd's broken-doll Ophelia, whom we've seen smooching with her to a cracked record of 1920s dance music. on the Bedfordshire section of the M1, maybe.

There's much else in Robert Walker's revival to transform an Incomparable Max into an Incredulous Max. Its visual style, roughly speaking, is Elizabethan punk as observed by a Grosz, Beckmann or Otto Dix: Robin Hooper's Polonius, a toothy, smirking blend of skinhead and clown, sporting a spotted dressing gown, circus ruff, and, over the chest, see-through cellophane; Maggie Steed's giggling Gertrude, breasts bared and nipples cutely manicured; the painted courtiers of gaudy Elsinore hissing and snarling in sycophantic homage to their king. Moreover, this is a 'promenade' production, which means that the cast is constantly elbowing through a meandering audience en route from the giant claws of an anthropomorphic throne to a platform tooled out with organ-pipes and cherubs, and from there to one of the other two stages in the gaunt, shabby Mile End hall that calls itself the New Half Moon.

The important question, however, is whether Ms de la Tour gives fresh impetus to a tradition that seems to have lapsed since the 82-year-old Esme Beringer masculated herself into a sweet prince of sorts back in 1938. Let's dismiss as facetious the suggestion that a female Hamlet at last explains why Denmark's electoral college passed over the obvious heir in favour of his/her uncle, and accept that we're meant to believe that Ms de la Tour is a verifiably male member of what, to judge by Sam Cox's sinuous and attenuated Claudius, is already a somewhat androgynous-looking royal family. For those of us who have seen Dogberry transliterated into a Peter Sellers Indian in a 19th-century Raj, Orsino as a parody Noel Coward, Ariel as an embryo Jomo Kenyatta, John Dexter's all-male *As You Like It*, and the thousand other oddities and eccentricities of contemporary Shakespeare production, this would seem to require a relatively modest suspension of disbelief. Moreover, Hamlet is hardly the butchest of heroes. I can't see even the gamest of our actresses succeeding as Coriolanus or Tamberlaine or, an experiment actually tried and botched two years ago, the fighting-men in *Troilus and Cressida*; but introspection, hesitancy, a self-doubt that extends to love as well as to revenge, would seem within the range of very many.

That said, how does Frances fare? Occasionally she overcompensates for her lack of the conventional gender, as when she roars aggressively through the audience, which duly parts like the Red Sea, and delivers a most intimate soliloquy with souped-up vox and hyped-up gestures, like a public debate between the euthanasia and right-to-life lobbies. Once or twice she falls into an opposing error, petulantly stamping like the 'drab' and 'scullion' Hamlet accuses himself of being, and flirtatiously rumpling Rosencrantz's hair on the line 'what a piece of work is man'. Sometimes she is droopy and hangdog, sometimes querulous, sometimes plain dull. But there's feeling in that spiky, starved face, intelligence in that glum, pained voice. And there are times – notably when she's denouncing those authentic females, Gertrude and Ophelia – when she rises to an anguished outrage of which few men would be capable. Perhaps only a modern woman could touch the note Ms de la Tour sounds: how *can* members of the sex permit themselves to be cheapened and exploited like this?

Hamlet's encounter with his mother is, however, given an extra twist by Mr Walker's production. In its view, he suffers from traditional Oedipalism, which is presumably why Ms de la Tour proceeds to hug, wrestle, and very nearly rape the half-naked Ms Steed. In its view, too, he represents integrity of feeling in a world where duplicity constantly threatens to become triplicity and political intrigue already is an acrostic nightmare. As something of a Shakespearean conservative myself, I naturally found the courtly caricature over-emphatic, a denunciation of Danish decadence as it might have been dictated by some Baroque-period Gang of Four; and yet its simplicities were calculated and acknowledged, ably enough delivered by most of the cast, and, on the first night at least, received with some enthusiasm by a more-than-usually variegated audience. Consistently or not, I had a far better time than at the National's *Richard III*, which takes respect for the bard to the po-faced extremes of a Mayfair butler, and would be much more inclined to use the result to prove to a novice or sceptic that the school classics can be energetic, immediate, and fun.

Scant need to linger over the latest revival of Tom Stoppard's Shakespearean spin-off except to note, first, that the decision to play it in Savile-Row suits robs it of some of its whimsical charm, second, that the *Hamlet* with which it's being performed in repertoire must have got odder since I caught it last year. Even at the Half Moon they might have winced at the moment in which Bev Willis's earnest Rosencrantz, Micky O'Donoughue's goofy Guildenstern and Anthony Milner's fey Hamlet sprawled their way off stage, goosing each other.

Middle Age Spread, the latest piece of wry Ayckbournism to hit Shaftesbury Avenue, is better acted than this, and pretty competently

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written, too. Occasionally its gallows-eye-view of modern marriage – three mismatched couples at and before one of those dinner parties where guilty secrets pop and fresh disasters loom – falls into theatrical cliché But Roger Hall, of whom I know nothing except that he's an English-born teacher with a reputation for drama in the Antipodes, does also seem personally acquainted with the rubicon that divides the thirties from the forties. I'm not sure if it's a recommendation or not; but those males who feel overweight, mildewed, self-doubting, restless, failed, or menopausal in any other way, may recognise at least part of themselves here.

The re-opened Lyric, Hammersmith, is a bit like the Regency bedroom constructed by space-aliens for the hero of *2001*. You go into a concrete shopping centre, up four floors by lift, and there, plaster frills and all, is a rococo-Victorian auditorium, scrupulously dismantled in 1972 and now painstakingly re-pieced together. This time-warp's first offering is a comedy Shaw himself dismissed as hack but recent criticism has begun to appreciate as an amusing instance of the arch-debunker debunking his own pet principles. The 'advanced' rationalists are left looking a little silly, and those representing old-fashioned affections surprisingly wise. David Giles's production wasn't helped on the press night either by a stolid audience or by the miscasting of David Waller, an essentially benign actor unable to cope with the grim, embittered paterfamilias, Crampton; but with Paul Rogers and Peter Egan in nice, easy form, the result may be counted a modest success, an omen (let's hope) of hoopla in Hammersmith over the years to come.

Theatre – 2

David Mercer

Sound & Fury

Appropriately enough, fading summer and early autumn brought a revival in the NEW STATESMAN of perennial questions about the theatre, politics and society. John Arden, reviewing plays at the Half Moon, Old Vic and the Theatre Upstairs, wondered if there were 'Any reason to believe that [these] productions, as presented in the places and after the fashions I have described, can do more than provide a basis of cultural complacency to enable the real-life warfare to be waged with increased efficiency.' Margaretta D'Arcy waxed demagogic, lamenting the unlikelihood of the combined forces of the Warehouse and Howard Brenton's play *Sore Throat* provoking a riot.

Brenton riposted with a cheeky haiku on D'Arcy ('D'Arcy can't forgive/Writers for their gentleness/Because she can't write'); and Benedict Nightingale brooded in ruefully avuncular fashion; he conceded the Ardens a 'forceful, eloquent' case here, Messrs Bond, Brenton, Hare and Griffiths a reconciliation to a 'less hectic' social timetable there; and appeared to be doffing his hat to all things in moderation.

Yet if D'Arcy is shrill and J. Arden more fastidiously glum – it would be hard to deny there is something altogether autumnal, if not an actual ring-a-ding Götterdämmerung, about English culture and society in general.

There is nothing new about writers being infuriated or despairing about the failure of their work to rouse the intractable masses, or achieve more than an impotent if passionate indictment of the ruling classes, establishments and institutions and their instruments of oppression. There is nothing reprehensible about it either. A sense of reservation creeps in only when one realises the extent to which writers can grow so angry and amazed to find themselves subject to the very same inexorable social forces they have identified and exposed. Dammit, you write a play about the iniquity of boiling babies in oil and before you know where you are it's ringing the till for you in some theatrical stronghold of the bourgeoisie. Or (better or worse?) playing in tiny theatres to small audiences who prior to the performance were firmly convinced anyhow that it's wrong to boil babies in oil. A doctor who diagnosed plague would hardly be surprised to find himself in the terminal ward along with the rest; but it's a prick against which writers have a tendency to kick with unflagging indignation.

Still, it's 23 years now since the crack got about that you couldn't hear the actors in *Look Back in Anger* at the Royal Court for the clink of diamonds in the stalls; and there is no doubt that the nation is, as John Arden says, undergoing terrible punishment. Understandable, in the circumstances, that he and Margaretta D'Arcy should demand of the theatre that it find a committed role in the ideological quest for what zonked-out American apologists in Vietnam called the hearts

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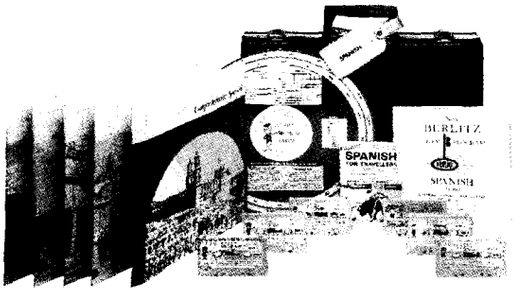

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and minds of the people. At the same time one wonders whether there is much serious reflection about the theatre and society going on at all. If there were, perhaps we should not be deceived by the sound and the fury into the temptation of assuming that an honest debate rages about us.

Nightingale's drip-drip-drip theory (that the impact of drama in a society is slow, cumulative, but in the end salutary for both the individual and collective conscience) is persuasive, though a mite hoary. The sort of thing your average playwright is driven to uttering in desperation when some heady interviewer gets his back really up against the wall. But if Nightingale thinks General Creasey is inhibited from 'untying the army's hands' because Euripides, Shakespeare, Ibsen *et alia* existed (and yes, he did imply he thought so), then he has a wonderfully fresh and childlike faith in the susceptibility of generals.

I don't know why it didn't occur to Nightingale to respond with the smack of firm government and point out that writers are under no obligation to take up the cudgels for the class struggle, Northern Ireland or any other topic deemed admissible by the proponents of the Theatre of Exhortation. It's nice to have our man at Great Turnstile pulling his forelock to a bunch of playwrights for a change; but the fellow clearly lacks the courage to say outright that overt ideological content in a dramatic work is not and never has been a plausible criterion of value. He manages to edge in his own preferences (for 'drama that questions, counter-questions, shares doubts, recognises contradictions, explores ambiguities' etc.), which are unexceptionable if tautologous. Only why not really stick his neck out and admit that what he calls the 'grim indictment' of our theatre coming from Arden, D'Arcy and others is little more than a hysterical and opinionated insistence that *their* preferred theatre has some kind of intrinsic superiority through its commitment?

People with any sort of left-wing convictions seem nervous nowadays at the very idea of openly refuting the stream of glib assumptions, sophistry, sloppy thinking and bald prejudice which boils out from their side of the barricades. Even Howard Brenton still genuflects to Lenin, if only to diagnose the hapless D'Arcy ('Didn't Lenin sort/You out bloody years ago?') as a victim of those 'childish disorders' more usually associated now with, say, the lumpen leftists of the *Time Out* reviewing columns. Lenin, bejasus, whose applied theory of the revolutionary party was possibly the greatest disservice to Marx ever concocted by man; who was capable of the remark: 'Intellectuals are shit'; and who (since we are brooding on art and society) was infuriated by Lunacharsky pleading with him to intervene on Mayakovsky's behalf in the matter of getting some of the revolutionary/suicide's poems published.

So what's wrong with a theatre of dreams? Of escape? Or of raw, naked being – such as the mighty Beckett will undoubtedly leave to the ages?

Socialists who work in the theatre should remind themselves that the *raison d'être* is to achieve a condition of liberty, to redeem or re-possess both the natural and created worlds from the degradation and squalor of brute capitalist relations. But it seems as if libertarian respect for any and every writer's small corner of insight, pain, truth, joy, poetry or even mere fun ... is divisible. It seems that plays must display their ideological credentials boldly these days or their authors, actors, directors and managements will be subjected to a withering flow of infantile derision from the self-righteous and self-appointed arbiters of what constitutes authentic drama (not to mention authentic audiences).

All this too contributes to the autumnal, twilight feeling. And as the shadows gather I'm inclined to think the only slogan worthy of a playwright's allegiance – and one which unites us in our privileged dissidence with sorely oppressed colleagues in Prague and elsewhere – is still James Joyce's: *Non serviam.* Which is indivisible.

Rock Music

Mark Kidel

Folk & Dada

Lene Lovich, *Routes, Exeter*

It is still not very easy to be a lady in the rock world: the music scene is male dominated and most of the women who get anywhere in the business are cast in the mould of puppets that reflect a limited range of sexuality. Male rock stars have been able to move far beyond the constraints of fairly standardised pretty-boy or macho appeal: they can be plain and pimpled like Elvis Costello, or outrageously eccentric-looking like Kevin Coyne, and it does not affect their popularity too much; but for women, it has been an entirely different story. Things are changing, however, and the growing tide of feminism is beginning to be felt in rock.

The Slits, with their own particular brand of mammary aggression, are perhaps not the best advertisement for the returning matriarchy, but their appearance at this particular time is an indication of just how things have changed. Unlike the all-girl groups of the past, they are not prepared to sell themselves to an audience of droolers. The same can be said of many other women that have come to the fore with the New Wave, from Siouxsie (of Siouxsie and the Banshees) to Poly Styrene – all of them shrill harpies, screeching in fashionable but nonetheless sincere despair. The trouble is, of course, that the majority of them are little more than mirror-images of their masculine counterparts, adopting the same poses, as if to prove that they too can rant and rave, now that the hour of liberation has come.

Lene Lovich – no new waver, but a phenomenon that could have emerged only in the creative period spearheaded by punk – may be one of the first women in rock to express something which is uncompromisingly feminine while never succumbing to the temptation of becoming an attractive plaything for the male fantasies that fuel so many female chart successes. She has been compared to Patti Smith, Edith Piaf and Sandie Shaw, but no clever comparison can do justice to her individuality. Like Ian Dury, whom she does not resemble in the slightest, but another unclassifiable original, she has been very well served by an association with Stiff, one of the few record companies that have consistently encouraged artists to be themselves.

Lovich is a Yugoslav, born in Detroit and raised in Hull – and one more in a long line of drop-outs from the British art school system. Like Dury, her show is something of an artwork itself, the character she presents on stage always a little larger than life, a surreal caricature, but close enough to our own experience to be accessible. Lovich personifies a mixture of archetypes, reflections of the Earth Mother: she is alternately and at times simultaneously, hag, temptress, high priestess and virgin, a combination of personae that she has – unconsciously perhaps – made truly her own.

Lene Lovich's baroque costume reflects her ambiguity and mystery, with its mixture of folk and dada: her ginger hair hangs in two long plaits, in contrast to the black of a complex lace mantilla, tied in large knots over her ears. She is dressed to enchant, to mystify and to amuse, and her stage act runs through just as many emotions. Her performance is a happy combination of play-acting and sincerity – so smooth a mix that it comes close to the overprofessional slickness of the entertainer. The other night at Routes, an ordinary club on the edge of Exeter, Lovich worked very hard to get through to her audience, never content to rest on the wild applause that followed each number. This too is an indication of the business-like way in which she approaches her work, but it is done with such personal charm that she can still overcome the predictable coldness that threatens to take over with the onset of success.

The Lovich sound – created in tandem with Les Chappell, Lene's long-time friend and writing partner – is as impossible to pigeonhole as her image: it bounces through high energy New Wave, disco, reggae, Euro-pop and distinct traces of Slav folk music. Lovich toots occasionally on the sax, but relying on it far less as a novelty than during the 1978 Be Stiff Tour, and Les Chappell stands by her, bald as Yul Brynner, hiding behind a pair of shades, and facially impassive but bursting from time to time into a series of leaps in counterpoint to Lovich's own movements.

Lovich's most popular songs – up-tempo numbers like 'Say When' and 'Lucky Number' – come closest to the inane normality of Abba, but the similarity is only superficial, and it is a derivation which Lovich exploits, overlaying the bouncy blandness with a distinct note of derangement. She uses her voice in particular to transform a straightforward dance number into a piece of folly, with the same healthy sense of the ridiculous that has kept British rock from getting too serious from the Bonzos to Ian Dury. She moves with ease from sensuous throatiness into wild and scatty bouts of *coloratura*. Her voice has a maturity and versatility not common among the women who have come to the fore on the crest of the New Wave, and she can shout like a rock'n'roller as well as croon like a French *chanteuse*.

Lovich fares well in the cosy atmosphere of a small venue like Routes, and she will no doubt suffer from being transferred through the dubious auspices of success into much larger halls. She obviously has it in her to cope with thousands rather than hundreds, but the already noticeable tendency towards a secure *performance* instead of the tightrope walking which characterises talent before it has made a name for itself, may be exacerbated by the needs of the concert hall.

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Films

John Coleman

Saddle Soap

The Frisco Kid (A) *Warner West End; ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads*
Beyond Evil (X) *Plaza 4*

Will somebody bring back the Gene Wilder of *The Producers, Blazing Saddles* and *Young Frankenstein*? When he subsequently chose to direct himself in *The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother* and *The World's Greatest Lover*, the results were disappointing. Now something even worse has happened: his latest director is Robert Aldrich. Viewers may recall Aldrich's *The Choirboys* of early last year, an obscenity about the off-duty pranks of American cops which stamped itself on the memory with the comic panache of a hobnailed boot. Now we have *The Frisco Kid* to contend with, a milder affair but hardly a Wilder one. He plays Avram, a heavily bearded young Polish rabbi, tied for last-but-one place in his passing-out class and despatched to head the new Jewish community in San Francisco. Arriving in Philadelphia, he is speedily fleeced by a trio of conmen, slung out of their wagon, befriended by an outlaw, Tommy (Harrison Ford), captured by Indians, obliged to kill a man and generally stood on his head. Eventually, he reaches his destination, outfaces a baddie and wins the hand of the community leader's pretty younger daughter. The film is essentially a string of episodes held together by the unlikely buddyism of rabbi and bank robber and tugged asunder by fairly consistent mistiming. To get away with murder, both ways, the lightest of touches is needed. The sight of Avram being used as a punchbag in a saloon or lowered over an Indian fire is unconducive to mirth.

But, then, Wilder has clearly been encouraged to deliver a rounded character, which he does, by fits and starts. His holy fool is often wily, too, as well as fearfully brave. Ford, on the other hand, as his reluctantly admiring and protective companion, is more two-dimensional – and, accordingly, more credible, closer to the requirements of farce. A scene near the close embarrasses because he and Wilder are seen to be observing different conventions. 'But I don't want you to go,' says Avram, breaking up. 'You *are* my best friend.' Against this dewy-eyed outburst, Tommy's ruminative, 'I never had a best friend' is strictly from stock. Not all is dross, however. At gun-point, I would admit to three or four nicely executed notions: Avram mistaking some Amish farmers for Jews and being gently received; his chattiness at breakfast leading a Trappist monk to break decades of silence; his attempt to impersonate a rough cowboy foundering on a remark about 'keeping my sidewinder waiting'. Given the trouble this Avram has keeping possession of his sacred scrolls throughout, a better title might have been *Torah Torah Torah*.

Liliana Cavani, she who gave us *I Cannibali* and the repellent *The Night Porter*, provides the week's biggest gaffaws with her two-year-old *Beyond Evil* (originally, *Al di la del bene e del male*, but the 'Good' has been felt redundant by the distributors). This preposterous piece opens in Rome in 1899 with a Jewish writer Paul Rée (Robert Powell) trying to persuade his opium-hooked friend 'Fritz' Nietzsche (Erland Josephson) to see a doctor. At a political-social tea Paul meets cool Lou Salomé (Dominique Sanda). 'You're a nihilist,' she says. 'No, just Disgusted', he says. Then they wander off to watch some homosexual activity in the nocturnal ruins of the Palatine. Soon Lou, Paul and Fritz have set up a *ménage à trois*. Nietzsche's jealous sister Elisabeth (Virna Lisi) tries to straighten Lou out about Fritz: 'He's respected by all the academics and even Wagner thinks highly of him.' That's as may be, but it doesn't stop Fritz from boasting of his 'sweet demon' – the syphilis he caught (shown in flashback) from a young whore – or from inviting Lou to piss in front of him, which she obligingly does. Ah, these free spirits.

This historical travesty turns out to be an excuse for some peculiar soft porn and *étonne-moi* antics, mostly relating to the gay world. Fritz, going mad, fantasises an erotic ballet danced by two naked gentlemen. Paul pays a tart to make love to a porter on a railway platform and ends up being gang-banged and more by some roughs he has picked up in a bar. Drowned soon after, he is summoned up at a séance, to announce, 'Since I've discovered I want to be a woman and be fucked, I'm happy': his ghost roars with laughter, as does Lou. One trusts this brief appetiser will obviate a visit.

Television

Julian Barnes

Hua Hua

Hua Guofeng is clearly a fan of Nabokov. For his first-ever TV interview, with Felix Greene on *Newsweek* (BBC-2), Hua adopted the expatriate Russian's lordly technique of making sure all the questions were written down and delivered in advance. Nabokov's disarming excuse was that 'I think like a genius, I write like a distinguished author, and I speak like a child'. Hua's reasons were probably less to do with making things more easeful for the viewer; he did his best by smiling all the time, but this marked both the beginning and the end of his accessibility. His answers were scripted by committee and vetted into jargon. 'Relying on the people, we continued the struggle until final victory.' 'It is imperative to oppose hegemonism in order to preserve world peace.' Even 'normal' statements become infected with the risible: 'We will build large-scale enterprises, but we will also build medium and small-scale enterprises.' Ah, so.

Trite and self-serving, such language often seems specifically designed to make it difficult to spot inconsistencies in official Marxist versions of events. But Hua's account of the Gang of Four's activities clearly needs a bit of polishing. On the one hand, their 'factionalist activities' aimed at setting up a 'fascist dictatorship' meant that 'the fate of China hung in the balance': 'railway traffic ground to a halt' and 'the economy tottered on the brink of disaster'. On the other hand, when the Four were arrested, there were 'no major, medium or minor disturbances'; they were 'quite isolated . . . and had lost all popular support of the masses'. So the Gang, usefully, were both extraordinarily dangerous and yet not dangerous at all; they had a mass following, then suddenly didn't have a mass following. Mao's dictum 'Seek truth through facts' was quoted, but you didn't sense any revolutionary zeal about its implementation.

Was it perhaps the lingering aura of Hua which seemed to lend a more Chinese aspect to Sir Huarold Wilson on *Friday Night, Saturday Morning* (BBC-2)? The show opened with the unkindest cut of the week: from a naked couple making reasonably vigorous love, to the jowly, mandarin face of Sir Huarold backed by a garish mural of the sort you get in restaurants run by nostalgia-ridden Italians. This wasn't the only oddity about the set: for some reason Wilson lords it on a high triple-tiered dais while his guests squat a few feet below at potted-fern level. I've heard of tycoons using the raised-desk ploy to make their underlings grovel; but I never expected to see it used on television. However, work it did: Robin Day and Winston Churchill toadied outrageously to their host, thus reversing the natural hierarchy of the chat show. The unseen audience sounded even more sycophantic than the guests: presumably they were at an even lower level. For instance, seated in a deep pit and up to their necks in sump oil.

By all accounts, Wilson's first programme was a disaster, with the stumbling ex-PM unable to recognise the difficulties involved in hosting a chat show; *in absentia,* the stature of Parky et al was raised by this debacle. To my eye, Wilson's difficulties didn't seem technical at all, but human: he just wasn't really very interested in his guests. He somehow couldn't get used to the idea that he was meant to be a feed-man, and kept itching for the conversation to get back to his own eventful years as PM. Day and Churchill enthusiastically fed this desire; even at their most assertive, they merely cheeked Sir Huarold as if he were a once-feared schoolmaster who'd collected his gold watch but still held the power to awe them. They played up loyally to Wilson's tedious trick of remembering far-off dates and figures, while the audience cheered from their sump. Finally, Mike Yarwood came on, announcing that laryngitis would prevent him from doing impressions. Next week: Harry Corbett without Sooty.

The case of the writer who isn't credited, like that of the dog who doesn't bark, sets off the most sly suspicions in the mind. Could it be, one wondered, that Donald Sinden has actually written his own script for *Discovering English Churches* (BBC-2)? Or even, is he simply ad-libbing his way from font to nave? This might explain not just the way he hates bidding goodbye to each syllable, but also his use of the dramatic pause to make you savour the coming cliché. 'Churches have always had an enormous fascination for me; it's a feeling of (*pause*) stepping back in time. Just going through that door is like going back (*pause*) 850 years.' It might also explain the thin time architecture has so far had from the most orotund front-man to hit our screens since Sir

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Huaw Wheldon. 'At that time, the, er, perpendicular style had been popular for some time, so it was built in the perpendicular style.' Seek truth through facts? By all means; but let's have a few facts first.

The only person who lived up to Mao's dictum this week was Lou Macari on *Match of the Day* (BBC-1). Commenting on his teammate Thomas, who had bluffed his way to a penalty by a thespian fall in the area, Macari admitted with a rare and perky honesty, 'Mickey's a good diver'. One wondered if he might not be pursuing some private feud; but little Lou turned out to be just as candid about his own misdeeds. Man Utd's winning goal had been scored after Macari opened up Ipswich's right flank by bodychecking Thijssen out of the defence; Ipswich manager Bobby Robson, aware of both football euphemism and the laws of libel, left his comments at, 'Macari's a clever little fellow and he's been around a long time'. The offender himself, asked by John Motson if he'd obstructed Thijssen, replied with a grin 'I would think so'. Mao would have been proud of him.

Weekend Competition

No 2589 **Set by Fatboy**

That honourable and munificent publishing organisation, Messrs Routledge and Kegan Paul, has come up with the goodies once again. They have just published a real ribtickler called *The Book of Heroic Failures* by Stephen Pile and the comp complex has been endowed with a veritable Pile of Piles, now on offer. What we want you to do is to write self-exculpating accounts of famous defeats and failures. They can be as varied as you like: Napoleon whingeing about Waterloo, Sonny Liston explaining how he got whupped by M. Ali, the Duke of Windsor telling how the Throne slipped through his fingers, and so on. 150 words; by 9 November.

Result of No 2568 **Set by Fatboy**

We asked you to give examples of Mickey Spillane's work under his various pseudonyms of Kingsley Amis, William Golding or Iris Murdoch.

Report **by Fatboy**

The King, Big I, and Mr Gold: no prizes for guessing which of the three you steered clear of. Chicken. Only two Goldings in the whole folder, to be exact: one from Greenwell and one from Roy Kelly (doubtless the result of some uxorial jibe). And half of them won prizes. Reflect on the moral of that and be wise, oh ye people of faint heart. £7 each.

The fluff was just another washed-out kid in this crazy academic business. Except that she had once popped enough pills to make her existence some kind of miracle. And except that she figured me for her prince.

I pulled out a deck of Woodbines, flipping one into my mouth. Her face was as white and stiff as frozen fish.

'Another mug of java,' she whispered. Yeah, this was the big comeback, and I was marked down as manager. Maybe it suited me. I munched some gherkins the joint had stacked up along the counter.

'So you'll be at the Welch's,' I croaked.

'It'll be the usual, James – chamber music, dance steps . . .'

I shuddered. I didn't give a goddam for art-parties. Too full of heavyweight punks shooting bull about fancy singing. Still, it was good for business. In my world, you have to rub skin with all the creeps. Academics. Some business.

WILL BELLENGER

I looked down. The butt of my .38 nestled snugly in my hand like a fistful of broad. My neck felt scorched.

I angled my gaze: there was something I couldn't figure about the kid. He looked and smelt like down-town Harlem, but I didn't buy it. Nuts! This kid had class stashed beneath his skin. A box of Kleen-Ezy wipes and he could be an aristocrat.

And then there were these other little jerks. They looked as mean and hardboiled as a bunch of sullen greaseballs. Only they carried spears, and the points weren't sharpened to spear cocktail onions. I kept my rod firm, and let a smile caress my lips.

There was some kind of blaze illuminating the island. Arson. It was a surefire bet. I could tag this whole mob with it.

I nodded to the kid.

'Okay, laughing boy,' I said, 'spill it'.

'Hullo,' he said. BILL GREENWELL

Jim's blood was boiling. He was about as controllable as a can of nitro-glycerine in an earthquake. In that aforementioned state of hypothermia he grabbed the front of her gown and the flimsy nylon parted like gossamer. He had, as a matter of fact, often wondered what gossamer was; like so may tropes, it seemed to have gone from novelty to cliché without an intervening stage of lucid familiarity. He vaguely associated it with spiders' webs, but weren't they supposed to be immensely *strong* in relation to the size of spiders? He brushed the thought aside. On fire, he smashed her lips so he could kiss the hot blood off them and took his maddened satisfaction, or at least the satisfaction of doing the thing that was supposed to satisfy you rather than what you spontaneously wanted to do.

'Do you want it now?' he grunted.

He wasn't asking permission, but she gave him a reply he couldn't hear. Was it the red roaring in his ears, or the fact that he had chewed her mouth into a sort of frayed gristle, like the disgusting bits of flavoured plastic some shags give to their dogs?

SMASHER RANSOME-DUVETS

'But *which* of my twin brothers is it that you want to see?' murmured Vaughan, laying down her Kelmscott Chaucer with one hand while with the other she gracefully levered up the stylus from the spinning Buxtehude. 'Otto, the monopsychotic one? Or Philemon who, being *un*identical, is of course no closer to me than any other sibling?'

Butch felt bushed. He'd delivered many a lead greeting-card in his day, but never had any broad high-hatted him the way this screwy little dame was doing. With those last five fingers of rye now really getting in amongst him, he had to act fast. 'Listen, lady –'

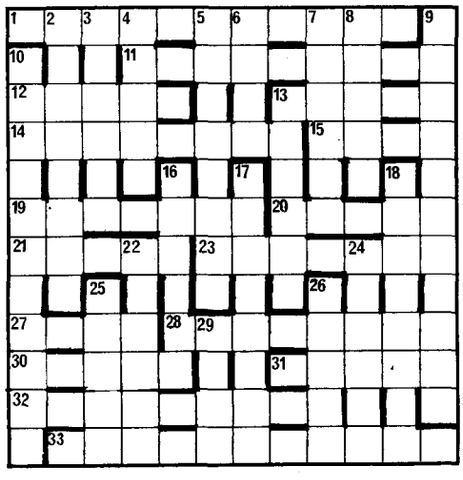
'Or is it Erasmus, my *foster*-brother?' continued Vaughan imperturbably. 'Or Leander, my *half*-brother? Or Ranald even, my *step*-brother? One does rather go in for brothers, don't you know,' she added absently as Butch finally hit the Wilton.

MARTIN FAGG

Somewhere in the post between Rio de Janeiro and Great Turnstile is a chess column written by Tony Miles. As soon as we receive it we shall publish it. Apologies in the meantime.

Salamanca 23: 'Plain'

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 23, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 6 November.



Chambers 1977 Edition is recommended.

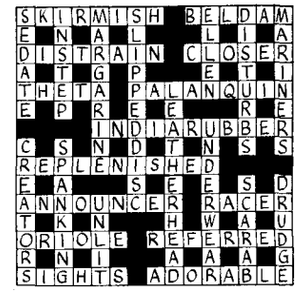
ACROSS

1 Not quite as good as the *best* sherry? I'm lost, right confused, taken in by cheat (11)
11 What it is to both Dracula and victim? Bode ill for last-mentioned, endlessly stricken (9)
12 Misanthrope once (at helm?) of Greece, clad in metal a very short time? (5)
13 Where Crockett fell half-dead? That's not right (5)
14 Who ornaments shields etc.? Some Serb, perhaps (8)
15 Name one at the forefront of the great powers (4)
19 Who surpasses drunkard in going over? (7)
20 Put on an expression of grief with 'goodbye' (5)
21 Plant variety of ocas with hard centre (5)
23 What's the sweet on the theatre canteen's menu? (7)
27 Mac's hungry – what's acceptable to go into the mouth? (4)
28 Chain of segments making up oral bits (8)
30 Author of most people – and all French! (5)
31 What are heard in e.g. 'Carmina Burana' (verse showing love's endless burden once)? (5)
32 Expression — — — style of Milton's not hard? (9)
33 Plant you'll find developing in petty cranny (11)

DOWN

2 Promisee's unreliable, being put on for second time (8)
3 One most waylay with foot (6)
4 Sleep lightly up North – be clods there when rising? (5)
5 Where might you see the rig when not working finding mineral, silent within? (8)
6 Some elements no longer gleam (4)
7 Given wench by Falstaff, no doubt, long involved in tale of woes (6)
8 Form a cabbage-head that's round in bale (5)
9 Dentine producer somehow bonds tooth endlessly, see, inside (11)
10 Bottom overlapping end of seat – o, a piggy sort? Gravity not necessarily involved with this (11)
13 Albanian regimented, notably armed, under Turkish leaders (6)
16 Mac's upset by one-time lucky throw in the air (6)
17 Jock's spinner, a medium top (8)
18 Turn vile perhaps, being so poisonous (8)
22 Cudgel – one long hammer (6)
24 A dam, one in brief divide (6)
25 Council meeting, Spanish one, described by Judge and Volunteers (5)
26 Heep's was a numble one (according to first-class book's lines) (5)
29 Thatcher's objective role? Yes, primarily (4)

Solution to No 1319



Prizewinners to No 1319

Mrs C. Plank (Sherborne)
D. R. Newth (Glasgow)
Mrs C. Bryant (London N22)

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APPOINTMENTS

NCCOP

THE NATIONAL CORPORATION FOR THE CARE OF OLD PEOPLE

Nuffield Lodge, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RS

DIRECTOR

Applications are invited for the post of Director of the National Corporation for the Care of Old People, an independent charity originally founded in 1947 by the Nuffield Foundation and the Lord Mayor's Fund to study and help solve the problems of the elderly. The need to appoint a new Director has arisen through the impending retirement of the present Director, Mr Hugh Mellor, on 30 September 1980.

The Corporation which is housed in Nuffield Lodge, Regent's Park, London NW1 has, at present, a staff of eighteen engaged on various research projects, the development of a specialised library and information service, the provision of advice to voluntary homes for the elderly, and the administration of a special Fund for the improvement of voluntary homes, provided by the Hayward Foundation. Its annual budget excluding grants from the Hayward Fund is of the order of £250,000.

The Director will be responsible to the Governors of the NCCOP for the general conduct of the Corporation's work, including research and policy initiatives and making the work of the Corporation better known. Further details may be obtained on request to the present Director.

Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae and a brief statement of the applicant's special interest in the work of the NCCOP. There are no age limits but the appointment will be for a period of five years in the first instance. The initial salary to be negotiated, in the light of the successful applicant's age and experience, will not be less than £10,000 per annum. The appointment will commence in the autumn of 1980.

Applications should be addressed to the Chairman, The National Corporation for the Care of Old People, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RS and marked CONFIDENTIAL. They should reach the Corporation not later than 1 December 1979.

PERSONNEL AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Equal Opportunities Commission was set up in 1975 to work towards the elimination of discrimination between men and women and to promote equality of opportunity between the sexes.

The Commission has a vacancy at its Manchester headquarters for a man or woman who will be responsible for the organisation and management of the Employment Section, and will advise Commissioners on the policy options and law enforcement areas of a wide range of employment issues. He or she will also maintain contact at senior levels with organisations connected with employment.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate substantial achievement as a senior manager in Personnel or Industrial Relations. They must have specialist experience in at least two of the following areas: Industrial Relations; Training and Career Development; Payment Systems and Grading; Recruitment and Selection. The post is demanding and provides a challenging opportunity to use wide experience and skills in a different context.

Salary is negotiable around £9,000 on an incremental scale to a maximum of £11,750. Non-contributory pension scheme. Five weeks holiday.

Please apply (marking your envelope Confidential) showing how the specific requirements of the post are met, to:

Equal Opportunities Commission

The Principal Personnel Officer,
Equal Opportunities Commission,
Overseas House,
Quay Street,
MANCHESTER M3 3HN

THE MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

an information charity concerned with international minority problems, requires an efficient and reliable

Administrative Secretary

for its office at 36 Craven Street, London WC2.

Salary £3,250, subject to annual review plus Luncheon Vouchers.

The position requires experience of book-keeping, plus typing, despatching orders and answering queries.

For further details please contact **01-930 6659, as soon as possible.**

Merchant Navy and Airline Officers Assoc.

ASSISTANT RESEARCH OFFICER

The MNAOA requires an Assistant Research Officer to replace a colleague who has secured a more senior post. The MNAOA is a TUC affiliated trade union serving a membership of over 44,000 in the shipping and air transport industries.

The job of the team is to service the union organisation on current issues and subjects of future significance. This requires liaison with a wide range of outside bodies.

The ideal candidate will have a degree, some knowledge of employment legislation, sympathy for the aims of the trade union movement and a lively interest in current affairs.
The post is a challenging one with plenty of opportunity for initiating projects and contributing to union policy formation. Salary not less than £5,337.

Further details and application forms can be obtained from: **The Administrative Officer, The Merchant Navy and Airline Officers Association, Oceanair House, 750-760 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3BB. Telephone 01-989 6677.** Closing date for applications **16 November 1979.**

JOINT WORKING GROUP FOR REFUGEES FROM LATIN AMERICA

has vacancies for

Fund Raiser: Experience essential; knowledge of Third World/Latin America desirable. Salary £4,470 p.a. (incl. London weighting).

Employment and training counsellor: Person appointed will be familiar with training schemes and trade unions and be able to develop contacts on national level. Willingness to travel and some knowledge of Spanish essential. Salary £4,470 p.a. (incl. London weighting). Can be based outside of London.

Community worker/regional organiser for Birmingham area. Person appointed will have relevant community/social work experience and be familiar with Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Fluency in Spanish essential. Salary £4,146 p.a.
Further details from **21 Star Street, London W2 1QB.**

TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Women/Industrial Relations

A vacancy exists for
AN ASSISTANT
in the
TUC Organisation and Industrial Relations Department
for a person who will be expected to develop TUC policy in relation to women's matters and, more generally, on aspects of Industrial Relations. Starting salary according to age and experience on a scale which rises in seven annual steps from £6,000 to £8,000 (including London Weighting).

Further information and an application form can be obtained by writing (quoting reference (R3) to **The General Secretary, Trades Union Congress, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.**

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Fieldwork Post

Senior Social Worker

(INTAKE)

SALARY: £6,654-£7,326 inc.

A vacancy exists for an intake senior on the North Area Team. This is a key position in a busy area team where the structure is that of one intake and two long term teams. Previous experience in intake will be essential. The successful applicant will lead and supervise an established intake group and must be resilient, flexible and able to demonstrate initiative.

There will be an expectation for the postholder to participate in supervision of students on recognised courses and opportunities for involvement in formulating team policy given.

Applicants must have a current driving licence.
Informal enquiries to be made to: B. Scott, Area Officer, ext. 32, or Bart Measure and Beryl Thornton, Senior Social Workers, on 01-478 3020 ext. 35.

Condition of Service

Working hours arrangements allow for one day's paid leave per month in addition to the usual leave entitlement.

Financial assistance will be considered in appropriate cases for the following: Car allowance, car loan, season ticket loan, removal expenses and home purchase expenses.

Starting salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience.

Application form from: **Director of Social Services, 17-23 Clements Road, Ilford, Essex. Tel: 01-478 3020, ext. 272.**

Redbridge
London Borough

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
20 Rede Place, Bayswater, London W2

Assistant - Industrial Relations

Administrative Assistant required to the Industrial Relations Officer of this Certified Independent Trade Union. The Job will include work on the training of Stewards and production of publications and regular newsheets to members. Administrative competence essential, interest in Industrial Relations and/or the NHS an advantage.

Salary rising with 8 increments, starting at around £3,900 depending on qualifications.

20 days leave. For details contact the **IRO on 01-229 9738.**

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amnesty international

requires a

TRAVEL ASSISTANT

To work 20 hours per week in the administration department. Previous experience in a travel office would be an advantage, though not essential.
Salary £2,631.85 per annum.
Closing date **9 November.**
For an application form and job specification contact: **The Personnel Office, Amnesty International, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, or telephone 01-836 7788 ext. 289.**

TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Public Education Policy

A vacancy exists for
AN ASSISTANT
in the
TUC Educational Department,

which is concerned with the development of TUC policy in the field of public education. Applications are invited from people with a commitment to Trade Unionism and an interest in the Trade Union Movement's policies for the public education service. Starting salary will be according to age and experience on a scale which rises in seven annual steps from £6,000 to £8,000 (including London Weighting).

Further information and application forms can be obtained by writing (quoting reference: Education) to **The General Secretary, Trades Union Congress, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.**

Southampton THE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Applications are invited for a

LECTURESHIP IN INDUSTRIAL STUDIES

Candidates should be qualified in industrial relations and have experience of and a commitment to working class adult education and trade union studies. Experience of teaching adults essential. Salary on scale £4,333-£8,992.
Further particulars from **Miss I. L. Breadmore, The University, Southampton SO9 5NH,** to whom applications (7 copies from UK applicants), should be made giving details of date of birth, qualifications and experience and the names of 3 referees by **19 November 1979.**
Please quote Ref: 649/A/NSt.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL THEORY and INSTITUTIONS

Applications are invited for the post of

Lecturer (Special Appointment) in Public Administration

in the above Department for 9 months from 1 January 1980, with the possibility of an extension for one further year from October 1980.

The initial salary will be within the range £4,333-£5,488 per annum.

Applications, together with the names of three referees, should be received not later than **8 November 1979, by the Registrar, The University, P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX,** from whom further particulars may be obtained. Quote Ref: RV/822.

McKINSEY AND COMPANY

EDITOR

Graduate with publishing or teaching experience to work with consulting staff in structuring, writing and editing reports.

The successful candidate will have the ability to grasp complex ideas quickly, work well with busy people and, of course, write impeccable English.

The job is challenging but has the reward of producing material to the very highest standards and handling projects from conception to end product.

Please write with curriculum vitae to: **D. W. A. Ambidge, McKinsey and Company, 74 St James's Street, London SW1A 1PS.**

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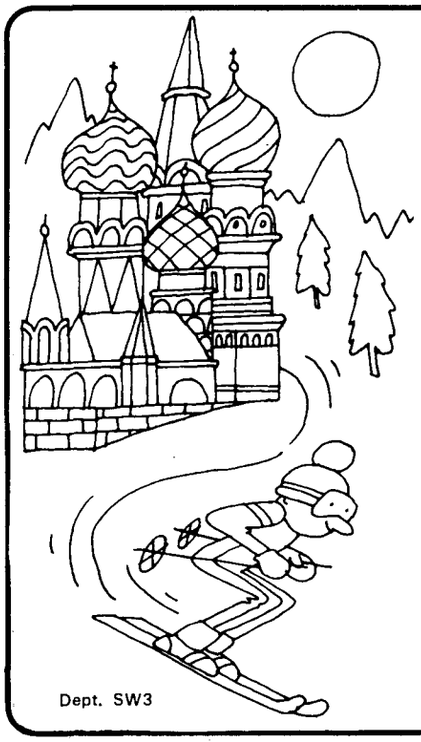

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NORTHERN IRELAND: The Way Ahead. Tuesday, 30 October at 6.30-10 p.m., Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, SW1. Speakers: Brynmor John, Gerry Fitt, John Pilger, Lord Melchett, Patrick Whelan, Sandy Scott, Jane Ewart-Biggs. £1 (50p Fabians) tickets at door.

THE CARING SOCIETY, Joint Fabian and Progressive League School, 2-4 November, High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts. Speakers: Nicholas Bosanquet, Margaret Bramall, Vicky Kidd, Allan Roberts, MP. Non-members: £19, members £17. Details Gladys Cremer, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1 (01-222 8877).

THEODOR HERZL SOCIETY, 'International Terrorism', Mr Walter H. Nelson, Thursday 1 Nov. 8.15 p.m. at 9 Adamson Road, NW3 (Basement Hall).

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, SW1. 28 Oct. 6.00 'Famous Last Words'. New Talks Series opening with Gregory Bateson. 1 Nov. 1 p.m. James Baldwin discusses his work and book 'Just Above My Head'. 80p. Tel: 930 3647.

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